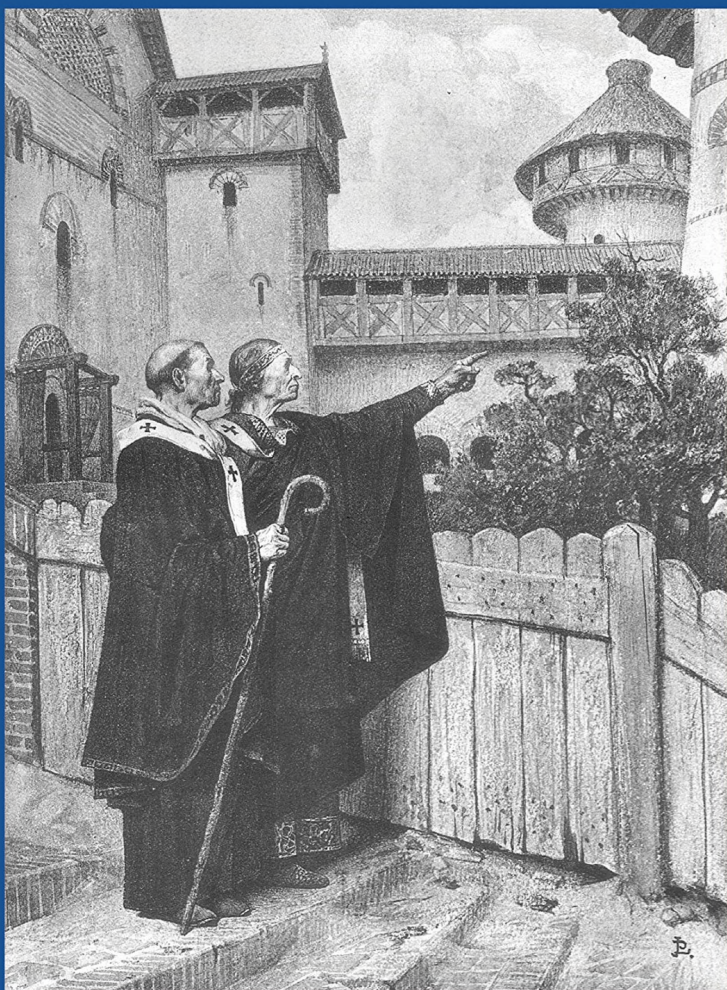# A COMPANION TO GREGORY OF TOURS

Edited by

ALEXANDER CALLANDER MURRAY

BRILL

A Companion to Gregory of Tours

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BRILL

To James, Colin, and Nolan

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Finally, I want to thank as a whole the indispensable contributors – indispensable because the aim of the volume could only be fulfilled if all of its pieces could finally be brought together in a single enterprise. Amidst the delays, commitments, and complications, they retained their good humour throughout, even when occasionally pestered by my questions on maps – none are responsible of course for what appears here. They have been unfailingly gracious colleagues.

It seems right also to mention *the* indispensable person, long dead though he may be, whose writings continue to allow us to say something about the late 6th century (and much more) as well as his role in shaping the period for us. Whatever in the end one decides about him, to those who study him, he turns out to be more than just a source.

Orton, Ontario 2015

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Abbreviations

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Abbreviations of Gregory's Works

CS	*De cursu stellarum*
GC	*Liber in gloria confessorum*
GM	*Liber in gloria martyrum*
Hist.	*Libri historiarum X*
MA	*Liber de miraculis beati Andreae apostoli*
PS	*Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium*
PT	*In psalterii tractatum commentarius*
VJ	*Liber de passione et virtutibus sancti Iuliani martyris*
VM	*Libri I–IV de virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*
VP	*Liber vitae patrum*

Other Abbreviations

a., s.a.	*anno/annis, sub anno*
AASS	Acta Sanctorum
BHL	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis
Carm.	*Carmen/Carmina*
CPL	*Clavis Patrum Latinorum*
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CD	Augustine, *De civitate dei*
ChLA	*Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*
CLA	E.A Lowe, *Codices latini antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century*
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
Diaps.	*Diapsalma/Diapsalmata*
DM	*Die Urkunden der Merowinger,* ed. Theo Kölzer, Diplomata Merovingicarum e stirpe Merovingica (replacing 1872 edition of Pertz)
ep.	*epistola/epistolae*
F	MGH LL Formulae Merowingici et Karolini
And.	*Formulae Andecavenses*
Marc.	*Marculfi formulae*
etc.	
Fredegar	*Fredegarii Chronica*
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
LB	*Lex Burgundionum = Liber Constitutionum sive Lex Gundobada*

LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHF	*Liber historiae Francorum*
LRibv.	*Lex Ribvaria*
LS	*Lex Salica*
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	Auctores antiquissimi
Capit.	Capitularia regum Francorum
Concil.	Concilia aevi Merovingicarum
Epist.	Epistolae
LL	Leges
NG	LL Nationum Germanicarum
SS	Scriptores
SRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum
SRL	Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum
SRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina
PLRE	*The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, ed. J.R. Martindale
RE	*Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
RGA	*Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*
ThLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*
TRE	*Theologische Real-Enzyklopädie*
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool)

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Introduction

It would be convenient and reassuring to say that Gregory, bishop of Tours (a. 573–594), needs no introduction. For the world at large, this is obviously not true, but for readers who have come even this far, I will assume that he does not need much of one, though perhaps the treatment of his work here does. Gregory was among the most prolific writers of his age but uniquely managed to combine history, hagiography, and ecclesiastical instruction. (For lists of his works see Abbreviations or Bibliography 1a and b). And he not only wrote about *events* (whether of the secular, spiritual, or even natural variety) but about himself as an actor and witness in his *Histories* and his hagiography (to use a not completely inclusive shorthand for his other work). He is also a person in much of his writing, not merely a voice dispensing information, homiletic and historical exempla (both positive and negative), and instruction, theological and moral (and even astronomical). The study of his works (especially the *Histories*, the overwhelming source of his fame) has – just to stick to a modern context – been carried out for more than 400 years. Nevertheless our grasp of an even basic perspective, never mind Gregory's significance in the history of the late antique West, has hardly yet attained a definitive perspective.

Despite lengthy inconclusive study of the bishop over the years, this volume does not begin in the midst of chaos. With regard to the *Histories* in particular, Gregory's profile in the present time has been enlarged considerably by scholarly activities around the commemoration of the 1500th anniversary of the baptism of Clovis in 1996 and by the publication of two immensely influential books on Gregory's *Histories* by Walter Goffart (1988) and Martin Heinzelmann (German ed. 1994; English 2001) respectively. These works did not come completely out of the blue, but drew on important literature from the early years of the last century down to the present (duly noted in the footnotes of Goffart, Heinzelmann, and the present contributors). Nevertheless, the two books by Goffart and Heinzelmann, it is fair to say, while recognizing, reviving, revising, and to some extent codifying, the best in earlier study of Gregory as an historian and hagiographer, advanced beyond it in creating new portraits of the bishop, his method, and thinking. Overlapping this attention to Gregory the person and historian, important developments in the broader history of Gregory's period should also be noted, especially an extraordinary interest in hagiography from an historical, literary, religious and 'anthropological' perspective, where again Gregory emerges as a central figure. Historiographical interest in Gregory as noted in the arguments and commentary of the following

contributions, however, tends to disguise a gap in our understanding of just how we have arrived at the point where the present work picks up. While the scholarship of the present day and immediate past is dealt with here in some detail and, at the other end of the chronological compass, even the post Gregorian world to the end of the Middle Ages receives two dedicated treatments, the grand intervening period has still not attracted a scholarly survey. It is considered here only in isolated comments and notes and awaits an investigator learned in early modern history as well as the present day *status questionis* of Gregorian studies.

The subject of Gregory's works is not necessarily obvious. Notice I said subject in the singular. It can be said, I believe, that Gregory's subject at a grand level was spiritual exegesis that he obviously thought was valid for all times and places. But in presenting this perspective, his history (and often his hagiography) come with particular details that have entranced, and confounded, modern commentators drawn to the world in which Gregory lived and upon which he commented. In sum, he is a source for those who study history, language, literature, religion and any number of other disciplines and sub disciplines that might take an interest in the 6th century. Readers will find all these subjects represented in what follows.

The present volume, nevertheless, has a quite general purpose. It is not intended to be a collection of article-length pieces on disparate, focussed aspects of Gregory and his works, casually brought to light when the pile before the editor reached a sufficient dimension. It was intended from the beginning, as its title suggests, to provide the reader with context for the principal areas fundamental to reading Gregory seriously and for the wider world in which Gregory as author and bishop operated – a world which shaped his experience and which he in his fashion has in turn conveyed to us through his works. The sometimes lengthy articles that here ensue address scholars and students of Gregory, but if not exactly designed for the novice, hardly preclude beginners (at whatever level) who are preparing to read Gregory or testing their initial impression of his oeuvre. Those whose interest is not primarily Gregory as such, but the age in which he lived and of which he is the prime source, should certainly find many if not all their interests addressed. Nevertheless, given the brief of the articles, those looking for just a particular modish subject that happens to rope Gregory in to its telling will have to search a little for such things, though endeavours like this will, I hope, not be completely disappointing.

As an editor I am all too aware of absences and deficiencies, lack of space and the passage of time. As someone once said, "Le meglio è l'inimico del bene."

Much of the rest of this Introduction will appear to be an apologia for the inconsistencies that follow in the volume's pages. The Merovingian world, like the modern one, if understood a little more broadly than national conventions allow, was not much for consistency. Each of these circumstances has played a role in the presentation of what follows.

To begin with Merovingian orthography. We do not know exactly what spelling Gregory or his secretaries used, nor should we assume that it prevailed everywhere. Merovingian names are presented on the following principles, if so purposeful a phrase is permissible. Common names in the literature are rendered pretty much according to English-language conventions, no matter how inaccurate. Thus Clovis, not the manuscript Chlodovechus (nor the later Ludovicus or Louis); also Chlothild, not Chrodechieldis; Brunhild, not Brunechildis; Guntram not Gunthchramnus; and so on. Chlothar is preferred over the later form Lotha(i)r and the manuscript Chlotacharius. When commonplaces like these fade away, the volume has tended to rely on a form close to the MGH editions of Gregory's works, convenient particularly for Latinate names. Following modern convention, Theuderic will serve for Merovingians, and Theoderic for Goths of that name; they are the same word, indistinguishable and variable in the manuscripts. In short, readers need to be prepared for multiple forms as they consult the sources or other literature.

There are more modest reservations to note for placenames. Though ancient names are not always the same as, or always readily recognizable in, their modern counterparts, more often than not elements of the original name continue in modern forms, though here English language versions prevail. Readers new to Gregory's topography should be aware of at least a couple of peculiarities. Predating the medieval and modern designation Clermont lies the ancient name of its inhabitants, *Arverni*, still happily providing the term Auvergne for its region. Convenae and Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges will probably variously appear for the ancient city destroyed by Guntram's forces in 585 and later reestablished with the latter as a new name; they are treated here as if they were the same place.

Some terms used are just plain anachronistic, in one direction or another, because of their convenience or tenacity in the literature: Visigoths for the Goths of Spain and southern Gaul, and Neustria for the north-west region of Gaul (the focus of Chilperic's kingdom), though strictly speaking that name is only attested from the next century.

Modern orthography needs a comment for those interested in this sort of thing. Authors have been allowed to write in the orthographic tradition they or their spell-checker prefers. Alas, for the tidy minded, this does not produce a

graspable Manichaean universe of British versus American usage, because Canadian spelling follows freely and randomly both, according to individual taste and background.

As for the important thing – the rest of the volume and the contributors' chapters. As readers will probably notice anyway, despite the occasional editorial cross-references, there has been no preliminary confabulation among the authors to get their story straight or work out a common approach. Any attempt by me to do that here would doubtless be tendentious and precipitate lawyerly cries of 'objection!' It is difficult for me, nevertheless, not to hazard the broad judgment that a remarkably coherent picture of the bishop emerges in the following pages, even if there is hardly agreement on particular details.

So it is now time really to just let the contributors speak for themselves.

PART 1

Gregory and His Circle

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Gregory of Tours: The Elements of a Biography

Martin Heinzelmann

1.1   Introduction: The Presuppositions of a Biographical Inquiry

The start of my research into the historiographical works of Gregory of Tours (1994) was already characterized by a biographical perspective, even though the coveted biography was not wholly worked out.[1] Walter Berschin believed that the *Histories* had a 'biographical' beginning because he considered that, in the opening sentence "scripturus [= as I am about to write] bella regum cum gentibus adversis," there was an echo of the opening sentence of Jerome's

1   Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* (Cambridge, 2001) Ch. 1; trans. from the original German edition (Darmstadt, 1994): "Gregor von Tours und seine Verwandtschaft: Prosopographische und biographische Voraussetzungen für ein soziales, religiöses und charismatisches Geschichtsverständnis"; cf. also idem, "Éléments autobiographiques," below n. 11. For biographies of Gregory see also the works of Margarete Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte der Merowingerzeit nach den Werken Gregors von Tours* 2 vols (Mainz, 1982), esp. 1: 205–220; Luce Pietri, *La ville de Tours du IVᵉ au VIᵉ siècle: naissance d'une cité chrétienne*, Coll. de l'École française de Rome 69 (Rome, 1983), 247–334; Raymond van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993); Adriaan H.B. Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 57, (Göttingen, 1994), 1–70; and Ian Wood, "The Individuality of Gregory of Tours," *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden/ Boston/Cologne, 2002), 29–46.

Vita Hilarionis.[2] In spite of this view, and in spite of certain apparently autobiographical indications in Gregory's work, it seems clear that a biographical desire and a biographical coherence are almost completely absent.[3] The interventions and the presence of the person Georgius Florentius Gregorius and the members of his family in the twenty books of his entire works are invariably subordinated to a testimonial purpose and, as concerns his own person, to an underlying spiritual truth.[4]

In total, the ten books of *Histories* (443 chapters) contain only three chapters concerning persons whose name and bond of kinship with Gregory are expressly indicated.[5] The 591 chapters of the seven books of miracles and of the *Life of the Fathers*[6] evoke kinship by the person's name and the basis of the relationship only four times – while the books *De cursu stellarum* and the *Treatise on the Psalms* lack any reference to Gregory's relatives. Thus, Bishop Gallus, his paternal uncle (*patruus meus*) is cited in *VJ* 23 and *VP* 2.2; in *VJ* 24, Gregory speaks of his older brother Peter (*frater meus senior*); and in *VM* 4.36, he mentions his niece Eustenia (*nepta* [*i.e neptis*] *nostra*). On the other hand, even in the Life of his paternal uncle Gallus (*VP* 6), Gregory, a nephew of this holy Arvernian bishop and simultaneously his hagiographer, breathes not a word of a family relationship. This is also the case with the biographies of his grandfather Nicetius of Lyons (*VP* 8) and of his great-grandfather Gregory of

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2 *Vita Hilarionis*, PL 23, col. 29, "Scripturus Vitam beati Hilarionis, habitatorem ejus invoco Spiritum Sanctum"; W. Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter* 1: *Von der Passio Perpetuae zu den Dialogi Gregors des Großen*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 8 (Stuttgart, 1986), 292.

3 Georg Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie* (Frankfurt 1955) 2/1: 357 f. and 366 f.; Misch, too, does not recognize in the *Histories* a link with the ancient tradition of memoirs; see p. 369 where he notes the lack of a tendency on Gregory's part to justify himself or even promote his own person, which are distinctive features of memoirs as a genre. Cf. below, n. 99.

4 For Gregory's role as the "prophet before the evil king," see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 41–51 (German ed., 42–49).

5 The list: *Hist.* 5.5 (his brother Peter, a *propinquus* Silvester, Gregory of Langres and his son Tetricus, and Nicetius of Lyons, "uncle of my mother"); *Hist.* 5.11 (Gundulf , "uncle of my mother"); *Hist.* 5.14 (a certain Necetius is "vir [=husband] neptis meae," the latter identified by Bruno Krusch (208, n. 5) as the Eustenia of *VM* 4.36, daughter of a sister of Gregory, who is also mentioned in *GM* 70 and *VM* 2.2, but without her name being given).

6 Gregory's rewriting of the Miracles of Saint Andrew should be added (*MA* 38) with the author's remark about his own birth, 396: "sicut in illius natale [scil. of Saint Andrew, 30 November] processi ex matris utero, ita ipsius obtentu eruar ab inferno"; for the text, see Martin Heinzelmann, "Grégoire de Tours et l'hagiographie mérovingienne," in *Gregorio Magno e l'agiografia fra IV e VII secolo*, (eds.) A. Degl'Innocenti, A. de Prisco, E. Paoli (Florence, 2007), 171–172.

Langres (*VP* 7). Neither do the chapters on these great saints in the *Histories* refer to their kinship with Gregory, who, in the series of Gallic confessors in the *In gloria confessorum* (*GC*), never mentions his kinship ties with the saints of the list, be they his episcopal predecessor, Eufronius of Tours (*GC* 19), or Nicetius of Lyons (*GC* 60), or Lusor of Dole (*GC* 90).[7] It is true that our author commemorates his mother (*mater/genetrix mea*) twelve times in the eight hagiographical books (as against twice in the *Histories*), but every time he conceals her name. That Armentaria *neptis Gregorii* (namely Gregory, bishop of Langres) in *VP* 8.2 should be identified with Gregory's mother would remain hypothetical except for a poem by Venantius Fortunatus, *Ad Armentariam matrem domni Gregorii episcopi* (*Carm*.10.15).[8] His father, too, is evoked four times in his capacity as *pater* or *genitor meus*, but his name, Florentius, is cited only by the way in passing, in a little story Gregory tells of his father's early youth where he is identified as Florentius son of a senator Georgius.[9]

To sum up, one should not expect from Gregory a special interest in exalting his family, in spite of his extraordinary attachment to his mother and a very genuine conviction about the exceptional social position of those ancestors of his who were deemed to have played leading roles in the Christianity of Gaul. His claims that a martyr among the glorious Lyons martyrs of 177 was a precursor of his Arvernian family, and likewise a senator who founded the first church at Bourges in the 3rd century, testify to this conviction, as also does his expressed conviction of a right of his antecedents to occupy the episcopal seat of Tours for at least five or six generations.[10] Lastly, the mere choice of bearing the Roman

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7   The chapter *De Tetrico episcopo*, indicated among the chapter titles (*GC* 105), has unfortunately not been transmitted. Other saints in the list possibly belonging to Gregory's kin are the Arvernian Georgia (*GC* 33) and Bishop Silvester of Chalon (*GC* 84).

8   For Gregory's mother, who was still alive in 587 (Martin Heinzelmann, "Une source de base de la littérature hagiographique latine: le recueil de miracles," *Hagiographie cultures et sociétés IVe–XIIe siècles* [Paris 1981], 240) and could have influenced Gregory by the transmission of important family tradition and by her profound religiosity, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 14–15 (German ed., 13–14). See also the testimony of the *Miracles of Saint Andrew*, above n. 6.

9   *VP* 14.3, 270, "a mei genitoris relatione cognovi…." The story refers to his father's introduction as a child to Saint Martius, whose biography Gregory composed: "Famulus tuus est puer Florentius, Georgi quondam filius senatoris." The other references to the father are *GM* 83, *VJ* 24, *GC* 39.

10   For the martyr Vettius Epagatus, see *Hist.* 1.29 and 1.31, in which is mentioned the senator Leocadius of Bourges, deemed to be a descendant of the martyr. According to the Life of Saint Gall (*VP* 6.1), it was the saint's mother, Leucadia, with her husband Georgius *de primoribus senatoribus*, who descended from the martyr. Gregory's source was the *historia*

tria nomina in the traditional way, and the names of the two main branches of his family, reveals a clear desire to identify with a family and its history.

Although Gregory was moderate in mentioning his own family in his works, his appearances in person throughout his writings are markedly more important. These self-expressions are voiced grammatically by the frequent use of the first person of verbs, singular or plural,[11] and by a rich deployment of the possessive *meus* and *noster* expressing the author's more or less significant identification with things or persons, such as, for example, *Sollius noster* and especially *Martinus noster*.[12] As a third method for these personal affirmations on the author's part, Gregory introduced a considerable number of speeches, fictive or real, in his work. First and foremost, these are the author's own speech corresponding to a type of metadiscourse (*Eigenrede*) based on the bishop's religious authority where Gregory speaks in his own name; we find them particularly in Gregory's numerous prologues and prefaces.[13] The analysis of these three methods used by the author to address his public seem, in sum, to constitute the best way of reaching Gregory's personality, because they unquestionably reveal the subjects to which he was most attached and with which he could identify. We shall have occasion to return to these elements of Gregory's utterances.

     Eusebi (Rufinus's translation: *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.9, "Vettius igitur Epagathus…erat enim et nobilissimus inter suos et eruditissimus"). For Gregory's remark about the kinship ties of the bishops of the city of Tours with his family, see *Hist.* 5.49, 262 lines 13–15. See Section 2, below.

11   Often, Gregory further underscores this expression by the addition of the pronoun in the form of the verb: *ego censeo*, *nos credimus*; the use of the singular/plural seems hesitant from time to time, which corresponds, inter alia, to the model of Sulpicius Severus in his *Chronicles*. See M. Heinzelmann, "'Histoire, rois et prophètes.' Le rôle des éléments autobiographiques dans les Histoires de Grégoire de Tours: un guide épiscopal à l'usage du roi chrétien," *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, (eds.) L. Holtz, J.-C. Fredouille, and M.-H. Jullien (Paris, 1992), 1: 537–550, 540 n. 12.

12   See Heinzelmann, "Éléments autobiographiques," 541–542. "Sollius noster" refers to Sidonius Apollinaris, no doubt related to Gregory by a parental connection; "Martinus noster" is Gregory's great model – Saint Martin – to whom *noster* is attributed nine times (3 times in the *Hist.*, 6 in hagiography). Other persons singled out by *noster* are Martianus Capella (author of a school manual used by Gregory), the Christian poet Prudentius, and Gregory's friend Saint Aredius.

13   See Heinzelmann, "Éléments autobiographiques," 539–543. One must underscore the importance of the prefaces/prologues for Gregory, who composed four for the *Histories* and 27 for the hagiographic works (21 of them in the one book VP). For the role of speeches in Gregory, see F. Thürlemann, *Der historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours. Topoi und Wirklichkeit* (Bern, Frankfurt 1974).
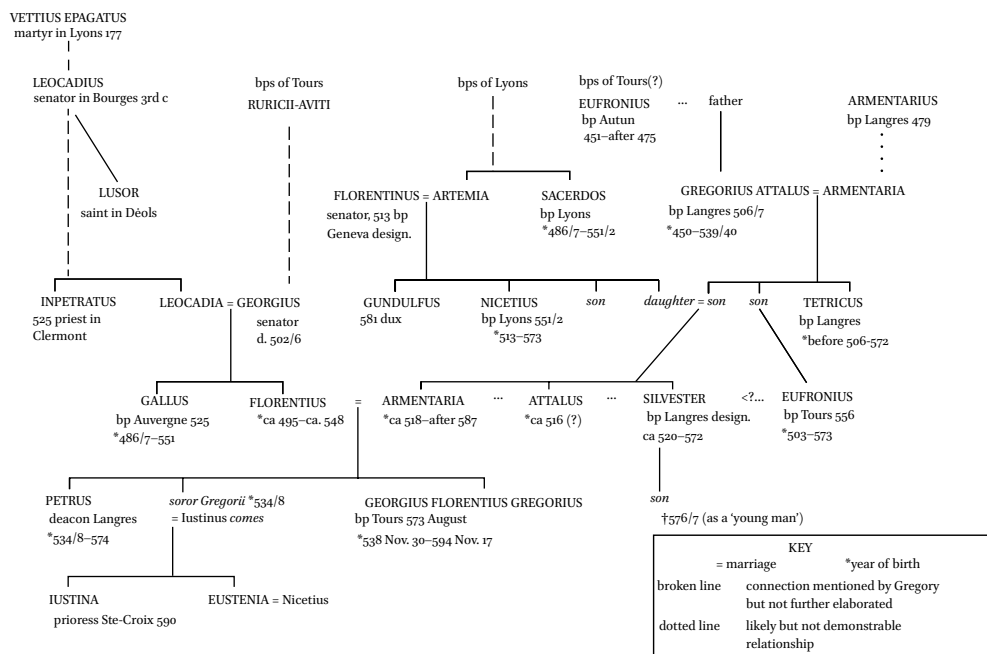
FIGURE 1.1   *Genealogy of Gregory of Tours*

1.2   The Family Context: An Episcopal Milieu, from Burgundy to Tours

Gregory's genealogical tree (see Fig. 1.1) has two principal branches.[14] One, the paternal branch, is Arvernian; the other, the maternal branch, reveals itself clearly to be Burgundian. There is more trustworthy information about this second line, whose emblematic figures are, on one hand, Nicetius of Lyons, and, on the other, Gregory of Langres, our Gregory's eponymous forebear.[15] In order to fully assess the information given by Gregory about the (paternal) Arvernian branch, one has to have recourse to more or less obvious prosopographic constructions and to our knowledge of the system of acquiring and transmitting the episcopal office in the 5th and 6th centuries. The

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14   The genealogical table generally corresponds to that of Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 10 (German ed., 12). Other stemmata: Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 792; Ralph W. Mathisen, "The Family of Georgius Florentius Gregorius and the Bishops of Tours," *Medievalia et Humanistica. New Series* 12 (1984), 83–89, at 88; Jean Verdon, *Grégoire de Tours "le père de l'Histoire de France"* (Le Coteau, 1989), 10.

15   Because the complete form of Gregory's name is most often presented as *Georgi(i) Florenti(i) sive Gregorii Toronici* (see Krusch, "Praefatio," ix, n. 2), Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 252 and n. 35, thinks that Gregory adopted this name at the time of his consecration as bishop. But according to *VM* 1.35, he was already called by the one name Gregory when he was still a deacon; see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 32 and n. 23 (German ed., 29 and n. 23).

example of Tours is one of the most suggestive (see the next section). In this period, the most important church office in most of the cities of Gaul had become hereditary in a few great families. They utilized this prerogative in spite of the right of *consensus* and of the final appointment of the candidate by the Merovingian kings.[16]

1.2.1   *Paternal Relatives: Auvergne and Tours*

Gregory himself bore the name of his paternal relatives – his father's name, Florentius, and his grandfather's, Georgius. The origins of his paternal family are unclear even though Gregory decked them out with prestige-laden epithets: the parents of his uncle Gallus he describes as from the leading senatorial families with none more noble in all of Gaul.[17] Failing other information about his father and grandfather, one can only suppose that this glorious description was related to the mythical origins embodied in the Lyons martyr Vettius Epagatus (*nobilissimus inter suos*) and a 3rd-century senator of Bourges named Leocadius.[18] Direct connections between Gregory's family and the bishops of Bourges are not known, but there are evident traces of the families of *Aviti* and *Ruricii* in the episcopal list.[19] For Gregory, the leading figure of this

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16   In the wake of the works of K.F. Stroheker (1948) and others, see Martin Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien* (Beihefte der Francia, 5, Munich 1976); idem, "Bischof und Herrschaft vom spätantiken Gallien bis zu den karolingischen Hausmeiern: Die institutionellen Grundlagen," *Herrschaft und Kirche*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 33, (ed.) F. Prinz (Stuttgart 1988), 23–82; idem, "L'aristocratie et les évêchés entre Loire et Rhin jusqu'à la fin du VIIᵉ siècle," *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* 62 (1976), 75–90.

17   *VP* 6.1: "ita de primoribus senatoribus fuerunt, ut in Galliis nihil inveniatur esse generosius atque nobilius."

18   See note 10. To Leocadius's descendant, Leocadia, mother of Saint Gallus of Auvergne and grandmother of our Gregory, Christian Settipani attributes a second marriage, after the premature death of her husband Georgius, to a certain Felix, born ca 500/510, bishop of Bourges after 565 who died after 573. This union would have produced a son, Avitus, archdeacon then bishop of Auvergne and mentor of Gregory, called *avunculus* (sic) of Gregory of Tours in a 9th-century text of Heiric of Auxerre (Settipani, 151–152); see "Les Aviti et le siège épiscopal de Clermont du Vᵉ au VIIIᵉ siècle," in *Saint Julien de Brioude, Actes du colloque colloque international organisé par la ville de Brioude du 22 au 25 septembre 2004*, (eds.) A. Dubreucq, C. Lauranson-Rosaz, B. Sanial (Brioude, 2007), 150–153. The argument seems unconvincing to me.

19   Bourges list: L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 2nd ed. (Paris 1910) 2: 26–28, with a mid 5th-century Avitus, Simplicius (ca 472), Ruricius (511/533), Arcadius (538, who is the son of Bishop Apollinaris of Clermont, grandson of Sidonius Apollinaris and great-grandson of the emperor Avitus), Felix (573). Bishop Tetradius (506) bequeathed a *villa* to Saint Julian of Brioude (*VJ* 14).

branch was his paternal uncle (*patruus*) Gallus, bishop of Auvergne, and no doubt the first bishop of the family in the service of a Frankish king.[20] Gallus' close contact with Theuderic I, king of the kingdom of Rheims that would become Austrasia, and his service as bishop to this king and other Frankish kings such as Childebert I, must have weighed in favour of our Gregory in 573, when Sigibert, another Austrasian, decided on his appointment to Tours. At the time of his episcopate, Gallus had institutionalized the annual pilgrimage from Clermont to Saint Julian of Brioude, where Avitus was buried, the last emperor of Gallic origin, who died in 457.[21] The emperor Avitus, by appointments to key offices of his administration, was responsible for the senatorial rank of a considerable number of his compatriots, most likely also with respect to the family of Gregory's grandfather *Georgius senator* (*VP* 6.1). Gallus himself was buried in the basilica of Saint Lawrence in Clermont, built in the 470s by Duke Victorius, a close ally of the family of Sidonius Apollinaris. In the same period, Bishop Perpetuus of Tours built a basilica of Saint Lawrence in Montlouis, not far from Tours, which suggests a common family background to these foundations, the *patrocinium* of Lawrence being extremely rare in Gaul.[22]

A remark that Gregory makes when in precarious personal circumstances sheds unique light on the story of his paternal family from the 5th century on. At a time in 580 when Gregory was obliged to appear before the episcopal tribunal of Berny-Rivière to defend himself in the presence of King Chilperic, back in Tours a priest named Riculf boasted of having rid the city of the Arvernians.[23] Whereupon Gregory comments: "The wretch did not know that, with the exception of five, all the others who have held the bishopric of Tours were connected to the family of my parents."[24] One quickly observes that the formula used to

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20   For Gallus, see *PLRE* 3: 502–503; Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 12–13 (German ed., 11–13). The epitaph composed by Venantius Fortunatus (*Carm.* 4.4) clearly uses information furnished by Gregory.

21   See F. Prévôt and F. Roberge, "L'empereur Avitus et Brioude," in *Saint Julien et les origines de Brioude*, 99–116. Deposed in October 456 and deceased at the start of 457, the emperor was buried there even though the basilica was not yet built.

22   See Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 24 (German ed., 23), for Perpetuus of Tours; the only other trace of a church of Saint Lawrence at the time involves Lyons, no doubt built by Bishop Patiens.

23   *Hist.* 5.49, 262, "[it was by his devices, Riculf claimed] Turonicam urbem ab Arvernis populis emundavit"; see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 23 (German ed., 21). As this Riculf would see it, the *Arverni populi* are no doubt, besides the bishop, his archdeacon Plato and his friend Galienus, both Arvernians, a fact overlooked by Mathisen, "Family," 84.

24   *Hist.* 5.49, 262: "ignorans miser [*scil.* Riculf] quod praeter quinque episcopos reliqui omnes qui sacerdotium Turonicum susceperunt parentum nostrorum prosapiae sunt coniuncti."

express kinship is relatively loose, since it does not allow the precise nature of
the bonds to be discerned. But this reference to the bishops of Tours allows us
already to understand the profound regard that Gregory had for the series of his
predecessors at Tours. As we see in Gregory's solemn 'episcopal testament'
forming the last chapter of the *Histories* (*Hist.* 10.31), the succession of the bish-
ops of Martin's city was the overriding framework, both social and spiritual, in
which Gregory definitively sets the balance sheet of his life.[25]

In this list, Gregory takes the place of nineteenth bishop but is preceded by
nineteen predecessors because the tenth place is taken by two bishops simul-
taneously.[26] The two bishops of the period of Brictius's exile (the 430s),
Armentius and Justinianus, were excluded from this series, but they too were
evidently able to belong to the circle of Gregory's relatives.[27] These consider-
ations produce the list given below, founded on the one in the 'testament' of
the *Histories* (10.31):[28]

		Dates	Social Origin	Investments at Tours[29]
1	Catianus	Before the 4th century		
2	Litorius	337/8–370	*civis Turonicus*	Established *prima ecclesia infra urbem* (now Saint Gatien)
3	Martinus	371–397	Pannonia; Roman officer	

25   For this 'testament,' see M. Heinzelmann, "La réécriture hagiographique dans l'œuvre de
      Grégoire de Tours," in *La réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval*, Beihefte der
      Francia 58, (eds.) M. Goullet and M. Heinzelmann (Ostfildern 2003), 15–70, at 15–23.

26   These are Theodorus and Proculus, expelled in the 520s from their former city in Burgundy
      and made bishops at Tours by Queen Chlotild, *Hist.* 3.17. For these persons, see Mathisen,
      "Family," 86, and for the difference of the succession of bishops according to *Hist.* 1–4 and
      *Hist.*10.31, see L. Pietri, "La succession des premiers évêques tourangeaux: essai sur la chro-
      nologie de Grégoire de Tours," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 94 (1982), 551–619,
      here 569–570.

27   *Hist.* 2.1; see Mathisen, "Family," 86 and n. 10, where, mistakenly, Armentarius is given and
      not Armentius. It also seems curious to include Justinianus in the possible kindred of
      Gregory 89–90 on the grounds that Gregory's sister would marry someone of that name.

28   The chronology is Pietri's, "La succession," 618. For the prosopography, see *PLRE* 2 and 3,
      and Heinzelmann, "Gallische Prosopographie," *passim*.

29   The term 'investment' is used in the sense of a capital investment in ecclesiastical founda-
      tions designed to maintain or provide a family's claim to the episcopal office for future

		Dates	Social Origin	Investments at Tours
4	Brictius	397–442	*civis Turonicus*	Built *basilica parvula* of Saint Martin
5	Eustochius	442–458/9	*ex genere senatorio; propinquus* of Perpetuus	Built church of Saints Gervasius & Protasius
6	Perpetuus	458/9–488/9	*de genere senatorio, dives; propinquus Eustochii* (*et Volusiani*)	Rebuilt Saint Martin's; built the basilicas of Saint Peter and Saint Lawrence. And note donation to Saint Martin's by Eufronius of Autun[30]
7	Volusianus	488/9–495/6	*ex genere senatorio, valde dives; propinquus Perpetui et Eustochii* (and of Ruricius of Limoges);[31] died in Gothic exile	Saint John's basilica at Marmoutier
8	Verus	495/6–507	(Of the same line as predecessor?); exiled by the Goths	
9	Licinius	507–519	*civis Andecavus* (Angers) (founder of a monastery in Angers); traveller to the East	
10	Theodorus & Proculus[32]	519–21	*episcopi de Burgundia*	

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generations; see n. 34. For the churches, see L. Pietri, "Tours," *Topographie chrétienne des Cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIIIe siècle*. Vol. 5: *Province ecclésiastique de Tours* (Paris, 1987), 19–39.

30   See Heinzelmann, "Gallische Prosopographie," 601 s.v. Euphronius; see also our Genealogy and below at n. 35.

31   The father-in-law of Bishop Ruricius of Limoges (ca 485–507), descendant of the Roman *Anicii* and related to the *Aviti*, was called Ommatius and this name was given to one of Ruricius' sons, who became a priest in Clermont and then bishop of the city of Tours in 522: see Heinzelmann, "Gallische Prosopographie," esp. 683; *PLRE* 2: 960; Christian Settipani, "Ruricius Ier évêque de Limoges et ses relations familiales," *Francia* 18/1 (1991), 195–222, and idem, "Aviti," *passim*, for the kinship between the *Ruricii* and the *Aviti*.

32   For the two, see Mathisen, "Family," 86 and n. 15–16. Their names are attested rather at Clermont, among them especially a Theodore *propinquus* of the emperor Avitus.

		Dates	Social Origin	Investments at Tours
11	Dinifius	521–522	*ex Burgundia*	Part of a former fiscal property donated to the *ecclesia*
12	Ommatius	522–526	*de senatoribus civibusque Arvernis, valde dives*; (priest at Clermont; son of Ruricius)	*exaltavit ecclesiam* of Saints Gervasius & Protasius; started Saint Mary's
13	Leo	526	*abbas basilicae sancti Martini*	
14	Francilio	526–529	*ex senatoribus, civis Pictavus* (Poitiers); *coniux Clara, ambo divites*	Donations to Saint Martin's
15	Iniuriosus	529–546	*civis Turonicus, de inferioribus*	Completed Saint Mary's
16	Baudinus	546–552	*ex referendario Chlotharii regis*	
17	Guntharius	552–555	abbot of Saint Venantius' at Tours	
18	Eufronius	556–573	*ex genere illo quod superius senatores nuncupavimus* (cf. bishops 5–7, 12, 14)	Restoration of church of Saints Gervasius & Protasius; basilica of Saint Vincentius built; restoration of Saint Mary's; new roof for Saint Martin's
19	Gregorius	573–594	Great grandson of Gregory of Langres, who was also grandfather of Gregory's predecessor	Renovations at Saint Martin's; rebuilding and enlargement of the cathedral; built the baptistery of Saints John and Sergius; enlargement of Saint Stephen's oratory (*GM* 33)

At first sight, Gregory's only firm relationship with one of his predecessors is that with his immediate precursor, Eufronius, the two prelates being, respectively, great-grandson and grandson of Bishop Gregory of Langres.[33] But since our author in his 'testament' specifies about the origins of Eufronius that he descended from the line that Gregory had formerly called 'senatorial,' we can from now on draw from it trustworthy indications for the kinship ties with bishops 5 to 7 of Tours, who moreover were *propinqui* to each other: Eustochius, Perpetuus, and Volusianus. Add to this series prelates 12 to 14, that is to say, Ommatius – in any case a member of the same family as Volusianus – and Francilio. With Ommatius, this group includes the only person whose Arvernian origins are specified, in contrast with the 5th-century 'senators,' such as Perpetuus and Volusianus, who were still attributable to several cities, in keeping with the supra-regional status of Roman senators. It is also noteworthy that this 'senatorial' group includes persons singled out for their wealth, who, very early, invested in church building at Tours (Perpetuus, Volusianus, Ommatius, Eufronius, Gregorius), or gave it bequests (Francilio and his wife Clara). In the role of church founders they no doubt prepared the future success of their descendants in the acquisition of the episcopal dignity.[34] Even Eufronius, who no doubt belonged to another branch of Gregory's ascendants than the former bishops called 'senatorial,' seems to have benefitted from the gift of a homonymous ancestor in 451, Eufronius of Autun, whose sending of a marble slab to cover the tomb of Saint Martin seemed significant enough for Gregory to speak of it in a chapter of the *Histories*.[35]

Whereas Eufronius unquestionably belongs to Gregory's maternal branch, the other prelates of the group apparently related to Gregory point more toward the Auvergne and thereby toward the family of his grandfather Georgius. This is surely the case with Ommatius, son of Ruricius of Limoges, but also with Volusianus, owner of the monastery of Saint Cirgues (Quiricus) near Clermont

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33   See genealogy, fig. 1. For Eufronius, see *Hist.* 4.15, 147 line 13–14: "the king, having made inquiries about saint Eufronius, was told that he was a nephew of saint Gregory," and the king replied: "prima haec est et magna generatio."

34   See Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 23–28 (German ed., 21–26). An example of disappointed hopes may be reflected in Eufronius's time in the partially successful contestation by a certain *Eustochius Pictavinsis* (cf. Bishop Eustochius of the city of Tours!) of gifts made to Saint Martin's: these gifts, made originally by his *cognatus* Baudulfus (cf. Bishop *Baud*inus of the city of Tours, †552), may have been intended to support the episcopal candidature of Eustochius, perhaps in the time after Francilio's episcopate (*VM* 1.30).

35   *Hist.* 2.15, the chapter directly follows that of the construction of Saint Martin's by Perpetuus. Eufronius of Autun was probably an uncle of Gregory of Langres.

and also a close relation of Ruricius.[36] Because the relations of the *Ruricii-Ommatii* with the *Aviti-Apollinares* appear established, one may even better explain the good relations of Bishop Gallus of Clermont with the latter.[37] These relations allows us to understand somewhat better the uncommon glorification of Georgius's family by the pen of his grandson, Bishop Gregory (*VP* 6.1), who in turn was addressed by his friend Venantius Fortunatus as an ornament of his lineage and a light from the Auvergne among the Tourangeaux.[38]

1.2.2   *Maternal Relatives: Autun, Langres-Dijon, and Lyons*
Clearly there was no bishop in Gregory's direct paternal branch, for the historian would not have failed to speak of him. For the maternal branch, this emblematic position was occupied by Gregorius Attalus, bishop of Langres, whose granddaughter, Gregory's mother, bore the name Armentaria, that is, the name of Gregorius Attalus's own wife. This Gregory must have originated from the city of Autun, where already at age seventeen he exercised an important office that allowed him to become 'count of the city,' that is, the administrative head of the city and region.[39] Such a career would have been closed to him without the help of the bishop of Autun at the time, Eufronius (452–ca 475), who no doubt was a relative, perhaps an uncle: a grandson of Gregory of Langres would also be called Eufronius (born 503) and would become bishop of Tours in 556. After Gregorius Attalus lost his wife, Armentaria, who had given him several sons (we know only the name of Tetricus), and after 40 years of governing Autun, he accepted clerical status and, in 506/7, the episcopal office at Langres. This change of city may have been tied to the origin of his wife, Armentaria, if – as one may suppose – she was the daughter of the Armentarius who was bishop of Langres from 479.[40] As successor of a certain *Aprunculus Divionensis* ('the Dijonnais'), the bishop who had fled Langres for a hasty departure to

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36   See Heinzelmann, "Gallische Prosopographie," 717 s.v. Volusianus 2.

37   See the works of Settipani, cited n. 31. The epitaph of the two Ruricii, bishops of Limoges (Ruricius II being the grandson of the first, † ca 550), is the work of Venantius Fortunatus, who, not personally knowing the two prelates, was perhaps prevailed on, once again, by Gregory of Tours. For Gallus and the *Aviti-Apollinares*, see above at nn. 21–22.

38   *Carm*. 8.15, 2–3: "forte decus generis, Toronicensis apex,/ lumen ab Arvernis veniens feliciter arvis."

39   For Gregorius Attalus, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 17–19 (German ed., 17–18), with a discussion of his double name and the office of *comes civitatis*. See also *PLRE* 2:179–180.

40   The acquisition of the episcopal dignity 'by inheritance,' through the wife's family, is attested e.g. in the epitaph of the prelate Chronopius of Perigueux (first third of the 6th century), Fortunatus, *Carm*. 4.8, 7–9, "Ordo sacerdotum cui fluxit utroque parente/ uenit ad heredem pontificalis apex / Hunc tibi iure gradum successio sancta parauit...."

Clermont in 479 (*Hist.* 2.23, 36), Armentarius probably resided in Dijon like his predecessor and as would also Gregory, twenty-six years later. At Dijon, Gregory of Langres organized the cult of an 'autochthonous' martyr, namely Saint Benignus, in the same way that, a half-century earlier, his kinsman Eufronius had done at Autun with the martyr Symphorian.[41] In any case, the episcopal office would remain in the hands of Gregory's family, first represented by his son Tetricus (died 572/3), then by the nephew of this Tetricus (and uncle of Gregory of Tours), Silvester. At the time of his candidature for Langres, Silvester, as our historian tells us, was supported by the Langres deacon Peter, older brother of our Gregory, who had however lived with his great uncle, Bishop Tetricus, and no doubt expected for this reason to take the succession himself.[42]

By another son than Tetricus, Gregory of Langres had as grandson Eufronius, bishop of Tours. By a third, perhaps the eldest, a union with another great family of Burgundy came about. Of the couple itself we know only the names of the children: Armentaria, Attalus, and no doubt also Silvester. The parents must have died young, because Armentaria evidently lived with her grandfather while an adolescent (*VP* 7.2), and Attalus, who was enslaved near Trier when a hostage ca 532, was liberated only by the intervention of his grandfather, without any mention of his parents (*Hist.* 3.15).

The name of our Gregory's grandmother, the mother of the second Armentaria, is regrettably unknown. She descended from a family that was no less prestigious than that of her husband, a son of Gregory of Langres. Her mother, Artemia, was the sister of Bishop Sacerdos of Lyons (after 541–551/2), a leading figure of the kingdom of Childebert I and the descendant of a line of Lyons prelates.[43] Before dying, he too was able to obtain from the king the succession to Lyons of his nephew Nicetius (*VP* 8.3; *Hist.* 4.36). Nicetius's father, Florentinus, *ex senatoribus* (*VP* 8.1), already had the final appointment of the Burgundian king for obtaining the bishopric of Geneva in 513 when he learned of the birth

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41 See M. Heinzelmann, "L'hagiographie mérovingienne: Panorama des documents potentiels," in *L'hagiographie mérovingienne à travers ses réécritures*, (eds.) M. Goullet, M. Heinzelmann, C. Veyrard-Cosme, Beihefte der Francia 71 (Ostfildern, 2010), 27–82, at 39 and 42 with n. 64. The granddaughter of Gregory of Langres, Armentaria, had a special veneration for Saint Polycarpus, organizer of the mission in Burgundy and central figure of the 'Burgundian cycle' to which Benignus and Symphorian belonged.

42 See *Hist.* 5.5, the most 'biographical' chapter of the work, in which there is mention of accusations of Felix of Nantes against the family of Gregory, whereby Gregory's brother Peter, out of his own ambitions, is supposed to have poisoned Silvester even before his consecration (572). Two years later, Peter was killed by Silvester's son, *aetate iuvenis*.

43 See Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft* (see n. 16), 146 sv. and for the relatives of the Ruricii, Settipani, "Ruricius," 206–209.

of his son Nicetius, future bishop of Lyons, and declined to become a bishop himself. Among his other children, there was a certain Gundulfus, *de genere senatorio* and a Merovingian duke, whom Gregory of Tours himself identified in 581 as *matris meae avunculus*.[44] The brother of this Gundulf must therefore have been Nicetius of Lyons, the saint par excellence for the historian-bishop of Tours, who instituted his cult in the Touraine.[45]

1.3   Gregory's Life

1.3.1   *Origins, Training, and the Wait for a Vocation (538–573)*

It is extremely difficult to judge just how representative is the scattered information that the historian transmits about his youth. As far as his beginnings are concerned, it seems to be acknowledged that he was born on 30 November, the feast of Saint Andrew (*MA* 38), of the year 538.[46] It is also generally accepted that he saw the light in Auvergne, a land that he calls *noster territurium* (*GM* 47, p. 71), where his family had lands that it cultivated (*ager noster, GM* 83; *ager possessionis nostrae, VM* 1.34). When Gregory was not living in a residence in Clermont itself (*VP* 2.2), he seems to have been at home in the Limagne, a region extending along the valley of the Allier to the east of the city (*GM* 83, *GC* 30; cf. *Hist.* 3.9, 5.33). As an adolescent, he assisted with his mother at a mass for Saint Polycarp at Riom (*GM* 85) and, nearby, he was in possession of the keys to the oratory at Marsat that he opened for the feast of Saint Mary (*GM* 8).[47] Only

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44   For Gundulf, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 20–21; and 22, for Florentinus (German ed. 19–20); *PLRE* 2: 568. Gundulf's Germanic name no doubt indicates a kinship tie of his family to a Germanic family, perhaps that of the Burgundian count Gundeulfus, who, at the start of the 6th century, signed the Lex Gundobada with 30 other counts. See *Leges Burgundionum* MGH Leges 2.1 (Hanover, 1892), 35 (lines 24, 27, 28). See also the bishopric of Macon, where one finds in the 6th century bishops Florentinus (formerly *vir inluster* of Autun) and Gundulfus.

45   Acquainted with a first biography of Nicetius (MGH SRM 3 [Hanover, 1896], 521–523), Gregory wrote about his grand-uncle the longest of the 20 Lives of the *VP* (*VP* 8) and also assigned to him a chapter of the *Glory of the Confessors* (*GC* 60). Nicetius's sanctity, grounded on his clerical state from earliest youth, was, for Gregory, superior to that of others.

46   See Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1: 205; Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 254 f.; Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 29 (German ed., 26 f).

47   Because the locality was the property of Saint Martin's of Tours in the 9th century, one may conclude that it formerly belonged to Gregory; see Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1:206 and 233.

for the feast of Saint Julian, on August 28, did the entire family, *pater cum omni domo sua* (*VJ* 24–25), go to Brioude, south of Clermont.

For the young Gregory, the beginnings of instruction in letters are reflected in two episodes he relates. In *GC* 39, the historian speaks of his father having a serious attack of gout (*infirmitas humoris podagrici*), following which the child (*in infantia*) saw in a dream a person asking him whether he had read the book of Joshua. Gregory replied in the negative, "I have learned no more than the letters of the alphabet, in the study of which I am now diligently engaged."[48] He was then instructed to write the name of Hiesus Nave (Joshua son of Nave) on a piece of wood and place it under his father's head. The next morning, Gregory reported this vision to his mother, who had him do what he had been told, and his father was immediately healed. A year later, the malady returned, and the child had another vision, which, this time, told him to have recourse to a method of healing described in the book of Tobit (Tob. 11:11). This, too, was applied and again was successful. In another account of his upbringing, probably set at the time preceding his two visions, Gregory evokes his age, locating the story as "in my youth, when I was beginning to learn how to read, and was in my eighth year."[49] If the episode took place in 546 at the home of his grand-uncle Nicetius (then probably still a priest in Chalon), one should not infer that Gregory stayed for an extended period of time in Burgundy: before telling of the two healings of Gregory's father, the chapter of the biography of Nicetius (*VP* 8) relates a sojourn of Gregory's at his kinsman's residence, a visit that would be followed by many more, especially when Nicetius became bishop of Lyons in 551/2.[50]

Gregory's father, Florentius, finally died of his illness in about 548, and his brother, Gallus of Clermont, took his place as mentor of his nephew. At a certain time, Gallus entrusted the boy for his later training to his archdeacon,

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48 "Nihil aliud litterarum praeter notas agnovi, in quorum nunc studio constrictus adfligor," *GC* 39, 322; trans. van Dam, 51, with n. 44. As his father died around 548, the two visions about his illness doubtless occurred in 546/7 and 547/8.

49 "…in adolescentia mea, cum primum litterarum elementa coepissem agnoscere et essem quasi octavi anni aevo," *VP* 8.2, 242; trans. James, 51. According to the ealier biography (preceding Gregory's), Saint Nicetius of Lyons was ordained a priest by Agricola of Chalon (532–580); see *Vita Nicetii* 3, MGH SRM 3, 521. One may believe that, at the time, he lived in Chalon, the place that Gregory's mother chose a little later as residence.

50 See *VJ* 2; *GC* 61 (and 62); *VP* 8.3, Gregory as deacon ("cum adhuc diaconatus fungerer officium"), which causes Verdon, *Grégoire*, 20, to say mistakenly that Nicetius made Gregory a deacon.

Avitus, future bishop of Clermont.[51] Since his education appears to have especially concerned *ecclesiastica scripta* (*VP* 2, prol.), it seems to follow that it began in the wake of Gregory's decision to take up an ecclesiastical career. His vow to enter the clergy, taken at the tomb of Saint Illidius at Clermont still before the death of Saint Gallus on May 14, 551, resulted from the happy outcome of a serious illness in his youth that had caused his uncle, Gallus, and his mother to despair (*VP* 2.2). The episode may also show that this conversion to an ecclesiastical career had not been evident for a long time but was the aftermath of a true decision, perhaps influenced by some physical frailty. As at the time of the visions for his father, which were both astonishing and effective for a child of nine and ten years of age, Gregory clearly gave proof very early of some maturity, indeed of strength of character, helped and influenced no doubt by his mother.

Gregory had an older brother (*frater meus senior*, *VJ* 24), who appears to have left his Arvernian family quite early – after the father's death? – in order to enter the clergy at Langres, with his grand-uncle Tetricus. Gregory had a sister as well, also older than he, whose name he does not disclose. She married a certain Justinus, a count according to *VM* 1.40. She bore him two daughters; one of them, Justina, appears in 590 as *praepotissa* of the noble monastery of Holy Cross in Poitiers (*Hist.* 10.15), whereas the other, Eustenia, married Nicetius, count of Auvergne and *patricius* of Provence. Gregory's mother appears to have left the Auvergne to take up residence in Chalon, where she is attested from 563 (*VM* 1.36).

In a chapter of the first book of the miracles of Saint Martin, Gregory tells the story of a *votivum iter* to the basilica of Saint Martin of Tours, a journey pledged because an illness that once more caused him to fear greatly for his life, as previously at Clermont in the period before his conversion. He speaks of it earnestly and with unaccustomed solemnity, placing his illness precisely in 563, in keeping with the number of years following "the ascent [to heaven] of Saint Martin," and the year of Bishop Eufronius' episcopacy at Tours and of the reign of King Sigibert.[52] As one follows the account of the journey, one learns

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51   *VP* 2, prol., 218: "tantum [me] beati patris Aviti Arverni pontificis studium ad eclesiastica sollicitavit scripta." Avitus was bishop of Clermont ca 571-after 592; his relation to Gregory is highlighted by Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* 5.5b, addressed to Gregory, who is called *alumnus* of Avitus in verse 145. For a conjectural kinship with Gregory, see above n. 18.

52   *VM* 1.32, 153, "Anno centesimo sexagesimo tertio post assumtionem…beati Martini antestitis, regente eclesiam Turonicam sancto Eufronio episcopo anno septimo, secundo anno Sigiberthi gloriosissimi regis, inrui in valitudinem"; the years given for Martin do not in fact correspond to the year 397 for the saint's death.

that Gregory was accompanied by, among others, one or more of "his clerics" (*VM* 1.33), that after his healing at Tours he returned home to the Auvergne (*VM* 1.34),[53] and that he was a deacon at the time (*VM* 1.35).[54] On the other hand, we never learn when and by whom he received this rank, and in what setting he exercised it, even if it seems probable that his consecration was the doing of Bishop Cautinus of Clermont (551–571), someone not highly esteemed by Gregory (*Hist.* 4.7,12).

Although he no doubt was a deacon in Auvergne, it is less certain that he was attached to the basilica of Saint Julian at Brioude, as one might think as a result of the assertion of Venantius Fortunatus that Julian sent his own *alumnus* to Tours to be bishop ("Martino proprium mittit Julianus alumnum," *Carm.* 5.3, line 11), confirmed by Gregory himself.[55] His sojourn in Brioude in 571 with 'his own people' (*nostri, mei*), when there was plague in Clermont (*VJ* 46a), should not be explained as resulting from a function attached to the basilica,[56] but by the traditional relationship of Gregory's Arvernian family with this sanctuary. In any case, the deacon had great liberty of movement at least from this date 571, when his mentor Avitus became bishop of Clermont. In this period, Gregory's and Avitus' interests are manifested in this period by joint visits to the Arvernian sanctuaries far from Clermont and Brioude (*VP* 11.3; *GC* 40). Owing to Gregory's silence, one may only conjecture that he as deacon amply utilized this liberty of movement[57] to also visit the former queen, the holy nun Radegund at Holy Cross in Poitiers, a city that, like Auvergne, was

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53   In *VM* 1.34 there is mention of an *ager possessionis nostrae*, and later, *VM* 1.36, Gregory goes to Burgundy so as to see his mother, "ut visitationis studio ad venerabilem matrem meam in Burgundia ambularem."

54   Moreover, the exclamation of one of his travel companions, "bear [an unjustly removed relic of Martin] to the deacon Gregory," tells us among other thing that he already had the name Gregory at this time, before his episcopal consecration, contrary to what some believe, such as Pietri at n. 15, above.

55   Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1: 206–207, supposes that Gregory was deacon with Nicetius of Lyons (a mistaken reading of *VP* 8.3), and cleric, possibly priest, in Brioude. For Gregory as *alumnus* of Julian, see especially *VJ* 2 (with Saint Ferreolus) and *VJ* 50. His use of the term *alumnus* does not imply an institutional relationship: *VJ* 6. 27, *VM* 3.8, 24, *GC* 94 (*regio alumna*, for Angers and Saint Albinus). See *MA* 38, 396, with Gregory as *alumnus* of Saint Andrew.

56   For the *lues inguinaria* in Auvergne, which killed Bishop Cautinus among others, see *VJ* 46a, dated by *Hist.* 4.31.

57   For the idea of the diaconate as a stage to the episcopal dignity, see B. Domagalski, "Der Diakonat als Vorstufe zum Episkopat," *Studia patristica* 29 (1997), 17–24, about Rome in the 3rd-6th century.

part of a region of the kingdom of Austrasia after the partition of 567 following on the death of Charibert. Likewise hypothetical are other journeys that must have led Gregory to the Austrasian court, where he gained the necessary acquaintance with the royal couple, Brunhild and Sigibert, and met his future friend Venantius Fortunatus. In a poem of 573 "Ad cives Turonicos," Fortunatus announces to the people of Tours the consecration of their bishop Gregory in the Austrasian capital by Egidius, bishop of Rheims. He underscores the affection that Radegund had for him, and notes that the royal approval of Sigibert and Brunhild ennobled the choice of Gregory as bishop.[58] In any event, on the nineteenth or twentieth day after the death of Eufronius of Tours, in the month of August, Gregory became his successor.[59]

1.3.2   *The Bishop of Tours, 573–594*

The accounts of our author-historian, scattered everywhere in his entire opus, appear to lack coherence and to be most often fortuitous when it comes to speaking about his family and biological forebears or telling the story of his own youth. As for the person of the prelate Gregory himself, responsible for the important church of Tours, he is seen relatively rarely in the hagiographic works where predominates the humble teller of sacred things and witness to the wonders of the Church. In the *Histories*, however, the bishop represents himself as a character in the foreground, emblematic and at the same level as the kings, an actor of biblical dimension, especially from the beginning of the fifth book.[60] His participation and involvement in political events are as a result enriched by the addition of strongly didactic and signifying implications. These evidently suit the pretensions of a work destined expressly only for the prelates of Tours, Gregory's episcopal successors and heirs,[61] deemed to represent the universal Church and, thereby the idea of a society strictly defined by its religious framework.

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58   Fort., *Carm.* 5.3, lines 13–16, Reydellet 2: 17, "Quem patris Egidii Domino manus alma sacrauit / ut populum recreet, quem Radegundes amet / Huic Sigiberthus ouans fauet et Brunichildis honori / iudicio regis nobile culmen adest."

59   *Hist.*10.31, 534: "Cessavitque episcopatum dies XVIIII." See also Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1: 207. An ancient Tours martyrology has the anniversary "Effroni episcopi" on August 3; see E. Martène, U. Durand, *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum* (Paris, 1717–26), 3: 1588.

60   See Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, esp. 41f. (German ed., 42 f.), and idem, "Éléments autobiographiques" as in n. 11, above.

61   See Gregory's 'testament,' *Hist.*10.31 ("Recapitulatio de episcopis Toronicis"), 536, enjoining his successors not to tamper with his works: "coniuro omnes sacerdotes Domini , qui

In 573, King Sigibert of Austrasia had chosen Gregory, nephew of a great bishop (Gallus) who had served the kings of this same kingdom, to govern a region that was vulnerable, owing to its outlying political location, and faced with a multitude of dangers. For Tours and its region, together with the city of Poitiers, were a part of the kingdom of the East (Austrasia) only since 567, that is, from the redistribution among the three surviving brothers of the inheritance of Charibert, the king who died in 567. Unlike Tours, the other cities of the immediate environs were dependent on Sigibert's royal brothers, and most often enemies – Chilperic of Soissons (with the region later known as Neustria) and Guntram of Chalon (with the region of Burgundy).[62] Moreover, as metropolitan city of the ancient province of Lugdunensis III, Tours found itself separated from its ecclesiastical province.[63] In this context, Gregory at first regularly had to oppose interventions from without, but from 577, in the wake of the murder of Sigibert in 575, Tours became permanently subjected to the rule of Chilperic until the king's death in 584. Afterwards the city was initially in the wardship of the senior king, Guntram, until it was restored in 585 to Sigibert's young son, Childebert II (born in 570); by the treaty of Andelot in 587, this restoration to Austrasia was definitively confirmed.

This basic situation gave Gregory the opportunity to work out his pedagogically designed history, featuring a king hostile to the Church and its principal representatives, the holy bishops (*Hist.* 5 and 6).[64] The theme was illustrated by the example of Chilperic of Neustria and the persecutions endured by Gregory himself and Praetextatus, bishop of Rouen. In this context, Gregory's eloquent address to his peers, on the occasion of an assembly in Paris meant to condemn the Rouen prelate, appears as the showpiece of episcopal ideology of this period (*Hist.* 5.18). Against the background of an Austrasia torn between a regency for young Childebert, constituted by the queen mother, Brunhild, and a few magnates, and the different parties of a strong nobility seeking only personal advantages, the story of King Guntram allowed the outlining of a more positive image of kingship based on a prince who was both a *bonus rex*

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post me humilem ecclesiam Turonicam sunt recturi…ita omnia vobiscum integra inlibataque permaneant." See Heinzelmann, "Réécriture hagiographique," as in n. 25 above.

62   For a detailed account of events 573–594, see Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 266–334, and Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1: 206–220. One may also consult Verdon, *Grégoire*, 23–39, and I. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (London, 1994).

63   For the rare interventions in the guise of metropolitan bishop reported by Gregory, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 50 f. (German ed., 49), and Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 293–302.

64   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 41–51, for Books 5 and 6; and 51–75 for Books 7 to 9. (German ed., 42–49, 49–69 respectively).

and a *sacerdos Dei* (*Hist.* 9.21). There, too, it was Gregory himself who had the role of an actor-witness, either as an official ambassador of the Austrasian king to Guntram (*Hist.* 8.13, 9.20) or as envoy representing his "master Saint Martin" (*Hist.* 8.1–7). On the latter occasion, his own vision of the dreadful end of Chilperic, astonishingly confirmed by King Guntram's almost identical vision, assumes the part of a divine judgment, irrevocable in the same way as Gregory's vision at the time of Chilperic's persecutions in 577, when he saw an angel announcing the end of the house of the Neustrian king (*Hist.* 5.14, 210–211).

Alongside these encounters of the bishop with the Merovingians, the head of the church of Tours in this time of political instability also had a fundamental role as the authority responsible for an important place of asylum, the basilica of Saint Martin.[65] Those benefitting from the protection of the most important saint of Gaul were regularly persons of high social rank, who by their presence provoked armed intervention on the part of their enemies,[66] interventions that constituted a threat to the existence of the people of Tours. When the Austrasian duke Guntram Boso left Tours at the start of 577, after thirteen or fourteen months of asylum in Saint Martin's, he set out with Chilperic's son Merovech, the two being accompanied by more than 500 persons, allowing us to have an idea of the troubles of Tours at this time (*Hist.* 5.14, p. 212 line 18). The comparably prolonged sojourn of the chamberlain (*cubicularius*) Eberulf, sought by King Guntram in 585 for having participated in the death of the king's brother Chilperic, gave rise to the presence of military units to pin down the fugitive in his refuge. These troops sent from Orleans and Blois to Tours freely despoiled the inhabitants, while the asylum-seeker himself made trouble at the holy tomb, offending the clerics and Gregory himself (*Hist.* 7.21, 22). In the wake of the troubles occasioned by the revolt of the pretender Gundovald,[67] Gregory was called upon to intervene in 585 with Guntram at

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65   See the fine approach of R. Meens, "The Sanctity of the Basilica of Saint Martin. Gregory of Tours and the Practice of Sanctuary in the Merovingian Period," *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, (eds.) R. Corradini et al., Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 13 (Vienna, 2006), 277–288.

66   For the intervention of Chilperic at Tours, in pursuit of Guntram Boso in his asylum, see *Hist.* 5.4 and *VM* 2.27. The same events are related twice, with notable differences, by Gregory, who was a participant; see M. Heinzelmann, "Hagiographischer und historischer Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours?," *Aevvum inter vtrvmqve. Mélanges offerts à Gabriel Sanders*, (eds.) Marc Van Uytfanghe and Roland Demeulenaere, Instrumenta patristica 23 (Steenbrugge, 1991), 237–258, at 252–255.

67   For this 'affair,' see now Walter Goffart, "The Frankish Pretender Gundovald, 582–585. A Crisis of Merovingian Blood," *Francia* 39 (2012), 1–27; one may also consult Bernard

Orleans on behalf of high-placed officials. He addressed the king in his role of serving Saint Martin and his asylum (*Hist.* 8.6).

About Gregory's cares in his own city, there is, uniquely, other testimony than his own. This comes from Venantius Fortunatus, who speaks of his friend and mentor 41 times in his poems or his letters.[68] Most often, these pieces praise Gregory, in connection with his interest in metric poetry, and thank him for gifts – a book, skins, fruit, a *villa* – received from the bishop of Tours,[69] but other poems are more detailed. Such is the case with two young girls accused of theft: one was sold as a slave on account of this, while the other was arrested. Fortunatus asked the *pater populi* Gregory to intervene in the same way that, on another occasion, he had done for a foreigner (*peregrinus*).[70] Gregory himself confirms his role as an intercessor for those accused of offenses. For in the case of an unjustly arrested man, who was able to give his guards the slip for a moment in sight of the basilica of Saint Martin and cast himself at the bishop's feet, Gregory was able to intercede successfully with the count, "nobis cum iudice conloquentibus," and have the accused released (*VM* 4.35, p. 208). Protection of his people went beyond criminal matters, and led Gregory, that guard of the public interest, *publica turris* (Fort., *Carm.*8.15), to engage in long negotiations with the king's representatives concerning the tax assessment of the city.[71]

Gregory engaged in these public services in his role as a bishop in a society that, for him, corresponded to the idea of a 'mixed' church seeking its eschatological destination. But he considered that his true spiritual project

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S. Bachrach, *The Anatomy of a Little War. A Diplomatic and Military History of the Gundovald Affair (568–586)* (1994).

68 For these, aside from the preface to the entire collection, see especially *Carm.* 5 (16 poems), 8 (12 poems), and 10 (7 poems), the letter of dedication for the Life of Saint Martin in verse, and the letter *Carm.* 8.12a, concerning the scandal at the monastery of Holy Cross in Poitiers.

69 Fort., *Carm.*5.8b and 9.7 (books); 5.13 (fruit and grafts); 8.19 (*villa*); 8.21 (skins).

70 Fort., *Carm.*5.14 (*de commendatione puellae*); 10.12a (*pro puella a iudicibus capta*). See also about the latter incident, *Carm.* 10.12b, 12c, 12d, to other officials involved; 5.15 (*de commendatione peregrini*). See further such expressions for the bishop as *pater populi* (*Carm.* 10.12a) or *Toronicus apex*, and *publica turris* (*Carm.*8.15), etc.; for these names with a social sense, see M. Heinzelmann, "Pater populi: langage familial et détention de pouvoir public (Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age)," *Aux sources de la puissance: Sociabilité et Parenté. Actes du Colloque de Rouen 12–13 novembre 1987,* (ed.) F. Thelamon, Publications de l'Université de Rouen 148, (Rouen, 1989), 47–56.

71 See Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 45f. (German ed. 44f.), especially about the visit of the *descriptores* to Tours and Poitiers in 589, *Hist.*9.30, Fort., *Carm.* 10.11 (Reydellet 3:88, with n. 170), and *VM* 4.6.

was primarily to work for the propagation and perfection of the holiness of the church. The spiritual 'testament' of *Hist.* 10.31 bears indisputable witness to this: his own episcopal balance sheet concerns only his church foundations and his written work in twenty-books,[72] both unarguably conveying a powerful message of the existence of the church of Christ.[73] Among his writings, the four books *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi* can claim a special place in documenting his life as a bishop, because they cover the whole time of his episcopate. Book 2 concerns the miracles "which were done after we came," that is, starting with the bishop's arrival in Tours in 573, down to an end in the fourth book, which was prematurely interrupted, no doubt owing to the failing health or death of the author.[74] All through Books 2 to 4, the miracles follow each other connected only by chronology, most often revealed at the time of the two festivals of the great confessor of Tours, July fourth (the summer festival) and November eleventh (the winter festival).[75] Despite the lack of a dating of the festivals by year, their chronology seems assured for the great majority of them and so constitutes a sort of skeleton for a life of the bishop, punctuated by the great deeds of Martin twice a year. As a rule, attendance at the festivals was an important duty of Gregory in respect to him whom he considered his *dominus*, the saint par excellence, Martin (*Hist.* 8.6).

With only one exception, the series of ten hagiographic books is the main source for other displays of 'holiness' on the part of Gregory himself. These are, for example, vigils at the basilica (*VM* 2.11), services officiated by him in person (*VM* 2.14, 25, among others), or his presiding over the translations of relics (*GC* 20, *VJ* 35, *VM* 3.47 among others). Where his episcopal activity is concerned, Gregory's supreme interest lay in the multiplication and development of holy places mainly by a generous distribution of saints' relics. The prelate himself underscored this priority of his episcopal role at the end of the *Histories*, in the balance sheet of his achievements, in which he speaks at length of a

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72   See M. Heinzelmann, "Sainteté, hagiographie et reliques en Gaule dans leurs contexte ecclésiologique et social (antiquité tardive et haut Moyen Âge)," *Lalies. Actes des sessions de linguistique et de littérature*, 24 (2004), 37–62, here 40–41.

73   See Chapter 9, below.

74   *VM* 2, title, 158: "quae factae sunt postquam nos venimus." On the interruption of the work: the last chapter is *VM* 4.47, but the chapter titles, heading the book, mention only the 45th chapter. The last datable chapter, *VM* 4.45, coincides with the summer festival of 593.

75   For the identification of the miracles and of the respective festivals, see Heinzelmann, "Source de base." In her year by year restitution of Gregory's episcopal life, Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1: 207–220, utilized these dates, as does van Dam, *Saints*, for his translation of *VM*. A slightly different chronology of the feasts is proposed by Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 541.

restoration of the cathedral undertaken by him in person and of the uncovering of a huge treasury of saints' relics, which he was able to install in the church.[76] In a *cellula contigua* he placed relics of the martyrs Cosmas and Damian and caused verses by Venantius Fortunatus to be engraved (*Carm.* 1.5, "rogante Gregorio episcopo").[77] Still in the context of his 'testament,' he speaks of the restoration and decoration of the walls of the basilica of Saint Martin by "our craftsmen" (*Hist.* 10.31, p. 535, "artificum nostrorum opera"), and of the building of a new baptistery for the basilica, with relics of Saint John and the martyr Sergius. He also reports adorning the old baptistery with relics of Saint Benignus, no doubt in reference to his Dijonian roots and his eponymous forebear, Gregory of Langres.

After his ordination as bishop at Rheims in August 573, Gregory's first steps led him initially to Brioude, from which he took relics from the tomb of Saint Julian in order to bear them to Tours and install them solemnly in the recently founded monastery of Saint Julian.[78] In this first period of his episcopate ("in primo sacerdotii sui anno," *VP* 2.3), he established an oratory in the episcopal residence with relics of the same Arvernian saint, Julian of Brioude; he associated them with those of his holy patron Martin and those of Illidius, bishop of Clermont, at whose tomb Gregory had decided his own conversion.[79] Together again, the linen wrappings (*brandea*) of Martin and Julian – the Tourangeau and the Arvernian – are in the altar of the oratory of Artanne (in Touraine), founded by Gregory, along with relics of (an uncertain) Saint Gregory, the martyrs Cosmas and Damian, Victor of Milan, and Nicetius of Lyons, Gregory's own grand-uncle.[80] At the dedication of a church at Pernay in the administrative district of Tours, Gregory associated Nicetius with Julian of Brioude, and he also bequeathed relics of his kinsman to the church of Petit-Pressigny

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76   *Hist.* 10.31, 534–535. For the churches of Tours, see Pietri, "Tours," 19–39, and eadem, *Ville de Tours*, especially 487–507. Fortunatus, *Carm.* 10.6, corresponds to "versus ad ecclesiam toronicam quae per Gregorium episcopum renovata est."

77   See Pietri, "Tours," 29. For Fortunatus's verses intended for the churches of Tours, see Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 822–831.

78   *VJ* 34–35. About the founding of the monastery of Saint Julian at this time, and Gregory's possible participation, see Pietri, "Tours," 37. See also Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 497–507, about the relics of Gregory, and van Dam, *Saints*, 50–81, for Gregory's cult of saints.

79   *VP* 2.3 and *GC* 20, in which relics of Saint Saturninus of Toulouse are also mentioned.

80   Fortunatus, *Carm.* 10.5 and 10. Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 826, proposes that the name of Saint *Gregorius* should be replaced by *Georgius*, but according to Reydellet (*Carm.* 10.10, 87, n. 166), the manuscript tradition of the *Carmina* does not support this hypothesis. Perhaps one should think of Gregory of Nazianzus, who is twice evoked by Fortunatus when he speaks of Gregory of Tours, see *Carm.* 5.3 and 9.6.

(Indre-et-Loire).[81] Other dedications and distributions of relics must also have followed, in keeping with his concluding words: "in many localities of the territory of Tours, I dedicated churches and oratories, and I honoured them with relics of saints" (*Hist*. 10.31, p. 535 lines 17–18). With reference to certain saints, such as Andrew, Julian, Martin, and Nicetius, one could say that "Gregory identified himself by saint cults,"[82] but this is only part of the truth, for his project was much larger.

In all these undertakings, one discerns a clear desire on the bishop's part to promote the holiness of the Church in keeping with the means that he widely proposed in his written work. But it is difficult to assess to what extent his action was significant for Gregory as an individual, and to weigh at their proper value the biographical share of the elements that he was able to transmit to us.

1.4   Conclusion: Some Personal Traits

When a distinction is made – as it generally is in current research – between the study of a person and that of individuality,[83] one quickly realizes that Gregory's work furnishes an important series of biographical elements, allowing a certain knowledge of the person he was, but without him ever attempting his own biography. Nevertheless, recognition of him as a representative of individuality, that is as "a person who has turned toward self-reflection and who thinks of himself as a particular, unique 'I',"[84] seems much less assured. What do we really know about Gregory the individual? In the present state of our knowledge, we are in a position to say that he was a person gifted in the spoken and written word, equipped with a literary taste inclining to metrical or rhythmic poetry,[85] and extending beyond ecclesiastical literature alone. He definitely had a great

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81   Pernay: *VJ* 50 and *VP* 8.8 (basilica built by the Tourangeau Litomeris); Petit-Pressigny: *VP* 8.11. Other installations of relics related by Gregory: *GM* 14, relics of John the Baptist in the oratory of the atrium of Saint Martin's, and see Pietri, "Tours," 35, and Fortunatus, *Carm.* 2.3; *GM* 33, unspecified relics and those of Saint Stephen in an oratory enlarged by Gregory, and see Pietri, *Ville de Tours*, 413–415.

82   Wood, "Individuality," 34. See also van Dam, *Saints*, 50–81.

83   A. Gourevitch, "Individu," in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'Occident médiéval*, (eds.) J. Le Goff, J.-C. Schmitt (Paris, 1999), 512 ; G. Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie* (as in n. 3, above), 366–374. See also Wood, "Individuality," *passim*, who, however, does not make this distinction between "person" and "individuality."

84   Gourevitch, ibid.

85   For the volume of Christian poems compiled by Gregory and lent to Venantius Fortunatus (*Carm.* 5.8b), see below, Chapter 9, n. 6. For the volume of Terentianus Maurus from

interest in humankind despite a certain pessimism, which occasions a good number of sarcastic comments about the social behaviour of his contemporaries. This characteristic trait even led Walter Goffart to compare the *Histories* to the literary genre of satire.[86] Elevated feelings were no stranger to him, but discerning them is not always as apparent as may appear at first sight. In a recent essay on Gregory's emotions, *Hist.* 1.47 (*inter alia*) is mentioned as "a scene striking for its emotionality."[87] But I have been able to show that the chapter in question is a rewriting by our author based on an underlying hagiographic text (*GC* 31), and that this rewritten text, by utilizing a refined vocabulary, skilfully changes a tale of love between a young couple on their wedding night into a metaphoric story illustrating the relationship between Christ and his immaculate Church.[88] The evidence of this example shows that one must first pay attention to Gregory's literary designs and the means he deploys to realize them.

But there are definitely emotions in Gregory, even though they show themselves most often, and in a clearly visible way, in the writing of well-rigged passages, in his prefaces/prologues, epilogues, or other prominent places.[89] And there is evidence of emotions, such as, for example, in his relationship with certain relatives: above all, his mother, whose words, full of tenderness, he reports when he, as a child, was sick, "today my sweet son, I will be full of sadness, for you are so ill."[90] Other than his mother, one may evoke his uncle Gall of Clermont and Nicetius of Lyons, who loved the nephew or grandson like a father, with *paterna dilectio* (*VP* 8.2). And there are some other friends, ostensibly 'saints,' of whom Gregory was particularly fond; among them, Abbot Aredius of Limoges and the noble Radegund of Poitiers, at whose funeral, in August 587, Gregory could not keep tears from flowing: "tantus maeror pectus meum obsederat, ut a lacrimis non

Gregory's library, lent to Venantius Fortunatus (Fort., *Carm.* 9.7, line 33 f.), and other indications of Gregory's interest in poetry, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 95 n. 5 (German ed., 211 n. 5).

86   W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (A.D. *550–800*). *Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), esp. 200–202. See also Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 90–93 (German ed., 81–83), with a few examples of Gregory's often black humor, and a general tendency to follow biblical stories.

87   B.H. Rosenwein, "Writing and Emotions in Gregory of Tours," *Vom Nutzen des Schreibens. Soziales Gedächtnis, Herrschaft und Besitz im Mittelalter*, (eds.) W. Pohl, P. Herold, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 5 (Wien, 2002), 23–32, 30.

88   Heinzelmann, "La réécriture hagiographique" (cit. n. 25), 54–59.

89   For Gregory's 'emotional style,' see the contribution of Pascale Bourgain to this volume, Chapter 5.

90   *VP* 2.2; trans. James, 14. For his mother, see also above nn. 6 and 8.

desisterem" (*GC* 104). For his very numerous travel companions, his *pueri,
custodes equorum, notarii, clerici*, one might perhaps interpret it as a sign of
affection that he gives them a name, such as the *notarius* Bodilo, "who was
one of my stenographers, [and] was so mentally befuddled because of a weak
stomach that he was hardly able to write and listen as usual or to record what
was dictated to him."[91]

From an 'emotional' standpoint, undoubtedly the richest source are the four
books on the miracles of Martin, the saint with whom Gregory lived narrowly,
and viscerally, every day. Gregory began these books as a result of the encour-
agement of his mother in a vision (*VM* 1, prol.). In them, he regularly disclosed,
as in a diary, the illnesses from which the great confessor freed him – in Book 1
(*VM* 1. 32, 33), in Book 2 at the start and ending (*VM* 2.1, 60), in the same way as
in Book 3 (*VM* 3, prol. and 60), and at the start of Book 4 (*VM* 4.1, 2), a book he
was unable to finish owing to his premature death.[92] More incidentally, he
reveals in this work that he had a personal taste for angling,[93] and he speaks of
his deep anguish (*pavor*), on Christmas day 575, when, at the time that the peo-
ple, coming from the cathedral, were entering Saint Martin's, he heard a pos-
sessed man bellowing that the saint of the place had left for Rome and would
hereafter perform his miracles there (*VM* 2.25); then, when nevertheless a mirac-
ulous healing took place, Gregory confesses again to having his eyes full of tears –
this time, of joy. Finally, as in the preface to *VM*, Gregory seems to disclose a
maximum of emotion in the epilogue to Book 2 (*VM* 2.60), when he openly owns
up to his real or virtual misdeeds, revealing himself in a surprising way to the

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91   *VM* 4.10; trans. van Dam, 289. Other companions were: the *clericus* Armentarius, *bene eru-
      ditus in spiritalibus scripturis* (*VM* 1.33), *duo pueri de custodibus equorum* (*VM* 3.43), *duo ex
      pueris nostris* (*VM* 3.60), *duo de pueris nostris, clericus scilicet Dagobaldus et laicus
      Theodorus* (*VM* 4.9), *puer unus ex nostris* (*GM* 65).

92   We cite these afflictions, often announced in the chapter titles, after the translations of
      van Dam: infected sores and a fever – "I lost all hope for my present life" (1.32, 1.33, same
      illness); "I suffered from dysentery and a high fever...[so] that I completely gave up any
      hope of living" (2.1); "the pain in my eyes and my headache" (2.60); "a headache has
      attacked, or a pounding has struck my temples, or my hearing has oppressed my ears, or a
      darkness has obscured the sight in my eyes, or a pain has appeared in other limbs"
      (3, prol.); "I myself suffered from a painful toothache" (3.60); "my stomachache" (4.1);
      swelling of "my tongue and lips" (4.2). Following Weidemann (*Kulturgeschichte* 2: 379),
      the *pustulae malae* of *VM* 1.32–33 are "Blattern" (smallpox); and see ibid. 378–383 for the
      identification of other afflictions.

93   *VM* 2.16: Gregory asks the Loire ferryman where one might best fish, "requireremus loca,
      in qua piscaturi procederimus." A consequence of this avocation may account for the
      accident that Gregory had with a fish bone in his throat, *VM* 2.1. See also the bishop's inter-
      est in the trout of Lake Geneva, *GM* 75.

public of the work: "I pray that the confessor...cleanse me from the illnesses that he often notes and contemplates, that he restore to me the light of truth, that he snatch me from mistaken unbelief, that he purify my heart and my mind from the ghastly leprosy of extravagance (*luxuria*), that he cleanse my thoughts from wicked desires, and that he dissolve and overturn my entire mass of misdeeds."[94] It is no less astonishing that the bishop appears to have feared a sentence to the infernal fire at the Last Judgment, and that he, even should there be such a final verdict, was always able to hope for the protection of his holy predecessor!

The list of Gregory's illnesses is not found in the *Virtutes* of Saint Martin alone. Earlier, he had already mentioned his health problems as a thirteen-year-old adolescent, which made him fear for his life and led him to choose to be a cleric (*VP* 2.2). He speaks further of other instances of healing from which he benefited, near Brioude at the church of Saint Ferreolus (*VJ* 25) and at Dijon, where Saint Benignus saved him from an inflammation of the eyes (*GM* 50). Lastly, in this same church, moss from the tomb of Saint Tranquillus finally soothed the sharp pain of his hands covered with small sores (*GC* 43).

Although Gregory adverts to his own illnesses exclusively in order to highlight the power of the saints, Martin above all, the occurrences can hardly be overlooked for an assessment of his personality.[95] The same holds for his visions, ostensibly numerous, but made known to us only in certain exceptional cases. It is true that our author had recourse to this form, which was very popular in his period and in contemporary literature.[96] We have already spoken of his vision announcing the end of the house of Chilperic (*Hist.* 5.14), the one that was confirmed by the vision of King Guntram (*Hist.* 8.5), both of them attesting to the condemnation of the Neustrian king. One can add to this a dream of Gregory's ("his diebus vidi somnium") told to the asylum-seeker Eberulf, revealing the bishop's fears of an armed intervention of the 'good king' Guntram in the holy basilica (*Hist.* 7.22, p. 342). Even more instructive for

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94   *VM* 2.60; trans. van Dam, 259.

95   For a comparison with contemporary figures, see A. Th. Hack, *Gregor der Grosse und die Krankheit*, Päpste und Papsttum 41 (Stuttgart, 2012), who occasionally refers to the examples of Ennodius and Gregory of Tours. The contrast in the literary treatment of their illnesses by the two Gregorys, bishops of Rome and Tours respectively, is clear : while the bishop of Tours always deploys a hagiographical reference to a saint, Pope Gregory, subject to continuous attacks of gout, went so far as to construct a 'theology of illness'; see Hack, esp. Ch. 2, 75–77, and Ch. 4.3, 134–139 ("Eine Theologie der Züchtigung").

96   See, for example, the preface of *GM*, in which Gregory refers to the famous vision of Jerome (Letter 22, ad Eustochium) in the tradition of the *somnium Scipionis*. For bibliography on the visions of the time, see our chapter 9, below n. 172–178.

Gregory's sensibility are the visions that he tells of having had in his childhood, when he was less than ten years old.[97] One is astonished in part by the precision of the instructions he received for the curing of his father, and in part by his mother's immediate acceptance and carrying out of her child's directions. Gregory saw his mother several times in a mid-day dream, "per somnium media die" (*VM* 1, prol.). She overcame his intellectual fears and convinced him to undertake the writing of the miracles procured by Martin in his basilica, thus carrying forward a task begun by Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus of Périgueux, and Fortunatus.[98]

In spite of all these elements, one must conclude that in our author is found no ambition of producing an autobiography or of relating or even making an inventory of his deepest feelings. His goal, documented exclusively by his writings, proves to be extremely social and directed totally toward an ideal society that is the Church of Christ. In this way, he seems to represent, at least following Georg Misch, a model example of a 'medieval personality,' built (Misch maintains) after a principle that excludes individuality because fundamentally referring to "preestablished forms" and "external" values. In Gregory, says Misch, the confidence of faith takes the place of an awareness of oneself.[99] We must therefore accept that we will never know to what extent Gregory practiced self-reflection, the more so as the society of his time made little allowance for the disclosure of such an exercise. Nevertheless, it may hardly be doubted that he embodied a particular, unique 'I,' who will definitely encourage further commentaries.

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97   See above n. 48, for *GC* 39.

98   Three other vision of Gregory's are related in *GM* 86: one Christmas night, after the vigils, Gregory twice fell asleep and was awakened by an apparition which, the third time, even hit his jaw.

99   "Diese Glaubensgewißheit ist an die Stelle des Selbstgefühls der Persönlichkeit getreten, das der hellenistischen Gattung der Schriftsteller-Autobiographie zugrunde lag," Misch, *Autobiographie* (above, n. 3), 374.

Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory of Tours: Poetry and Patronage

Michael Roberts

2.1   Introduction

Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus, to give him his full name, was born in Duplavis (modern Valdobbiadene), near Treviso, some time in the 530s. After receiving the literary education traditional in late antiquity in the still thriving schools of Ravenna, he left his native Italy for reasons that are somewhat obscure and traveled across the Alps to the Merovingian kingdoms of Frankish Gaul, probably in 565. His first datable poem written in his new home is an epithalamium for the marriage of the Austrasian royal couple Sigibert and Brunhild in the spring of 566, though a number of poems written for bishops in northern Gaul also date to this period. Subsequently he moved on to Paris, where he wrote a panegyric for King Charibert (561–567), finally settling in Poitiers in late 567 or 568. Perhaps too it was at this time that he first visited Tours and made the acquaintance of the then bishop Euphronius. From that time on Poitiers remained his main base of operations, though his poetry gives evidence of other journeys, for instance, to Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Nantes, and later a second visit to the Austrasian court at Metz.

At Poitiers Fortunatus made the acquaintance of the formidable founder of the Convent of the Holy Cross, Radegund, princess of the Thuringian royal family and former wife of Chlothar I, and of her abbess, Agnes. His poetic corpus shows the close relationship he enjoyed with both women. It contains fifty-five short personal poems written to one or both of the women, as well as a further thirteen that convey the greetings or speak in the voice of the holy couple or represent the convent's interests. Fortunatus' longest work, a four-book hexameter epic, the *Life of St. Martin*, begins with a preface in elegiac couplets addressed to the two women. He was to write a *Life of St. Radegund* after the saint's death (she died in 587).

In addition to its verse preface to Radegund and Agnes, Fortunatus' *Life of Saint Martin* also carries a dedicatory letter addressed to Gregory of Tours, thereby bringing together the figures that Fortunatus relied on most heavily for friendship and patronage during his years in Gaul. Only the women of the Holy Cross surpass Gregory in the number of poems they received from Fortunatus. The collection contains twenty-six verse epistles written to the bishop, most clustered in Book 5 (8–17), published ca 576, and Book 8 (11–21), probably collected in 590 or 591.[1] In addition eight other poems were either requested by Gregory or serve his interests. Gregory's initiative is explicit in the case of an epigram written for the cell where Martin clothed a poor man with his own cloak (1.5) and in a narrative poem celebrating Bishop Avitus' conversion of Jews at Clermont in 576 (5.5). It is a natural inference that epigrams for the oratory where Gregory kept the robe in which the relics of the cross had been wrapped (2.3), for the bishop's restoration of an oratory at Artanne (10.5 and 10), and for the rebuilt cathedral at Tours (10.6) owe their existence to Gregory's prompting. Poem 5.3 celebrates the *adventus* of Gregory to Tours as its new bishop, and 5.4 his *natalis dies*, presumably the anniversary of his episcopal consecration.[2] To these might be added 10.15, which praises Gregory's mother Armentaria for the distinction of her offspring. Two other poems owe their origin to occasions mentioned by Gregory in his *Histories* in which his or the city of Tours' interests are at stake. Poem 9.1 is a panegyric of King Chilperic, delivered at the trial of Gregory before the king and a council of bishops at Berny-Rivière in 580 (*Hist.* 5.49). Poem 10.11 addresses envoys sent to Tours by the royal couple Childebert and Brunhild. The poem identifies the time of year of the event, Easter, but gives no clue about the purpose of the mission. Its superscription, however, provides the missing information: "Verses composed at table in a villa of Saint Martin before tax inspectors" (*ante discriptores*).[3] The occasion has been plausibly identified with one recorded by Gregory in 589 (*Hist.* 9.30), when royal tax inspectors attempted unsuccessfully to reimpose taxes on Tours. A more distant connection with Gregory is evident in three of Fortunatus' epitaphs, which celebrate the bishop's relations: his great-grandfather, Gregory of Langres (4.2), that bishop's son Tetricus of Langres (4.3), and Gallus

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1   The full list of verse epistles is 5.8, 5.8a, 5.8b, 5.9–5.17, 8.11–21, 9.6, 9.7, and 10.12a. Poem 9.7 is in Sapphics, in response to a request from Gregory that Fortunatus try his hand in that meter, but its content is essentially that of an extended letter. I cite Fortunatus' poetry (with occasional minor changes of punctuation and orthography) from the edition of Marc Reydellet, *Venance Fortunat, Poèmes*, 3 vols (Paris, 1994–2004), hereafter cited as Reydellet.

2   So Reydellet 2:167.

3   The full superscription is "In nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi. Versus facti in mensa in villa sancti Martini ante discriptores."

of Clermont, Gregory of Tours' uncle (4.4). The last is unusual among Fortunatus' epitaphs in the fullness of biographical detail it includes. All the information it presents is found also in the first three sections of Gregory's life of Gallus (*VP* 6.1–3). Gregory presumably commissioned the epitaph and supplied the biographical details Fortunatus incorporates in summary form in his poem. Poem 10.14 bears a different relationship to Gregory. It is to celebrate the election of his archdeacon and protégé Plato to be bishop of Poitiers. Finally, Gregory's role as recipient and promoter of Fortunatus' poetry finds expression in the dedication letters prefaced to the *Life of Saint Martin* and to his first collection of poems (Books 1–7), an initiative that he attributes to the instigation of the bishop.

2.2   Relations with Gregory

There is no certain evidence for when Gregory and Fortunatus first met. The earliest datable poem that presupposes an acquaintance between the two is that written for Gregory's arrival at Tours as that city's new bishop in September 573 (5.3). It is sometimes said that the two were likely to have met earlier – the normal location proposed is the Austrasian court during Fortunatus' first years in Gaul – but, while certainly possible, there is no record of any such meeting.[4] Poem 5.3 provides no evidence that Fortunatus knew Gregory personally before his entry into the episcopate. Apart from a reference to Gregory as the foster-child (*alumnus*) of Julian of Brioude (5.3.11), the poem contains no individual details or indications of personal acquaintance.[5] The knowledge of Gregory's devotion to Julian was presumably easy to come by. A misreading of one line of the poem has sometimes given rise to the view that Radegund promoted Gregory's elevation.[6] If Gregory was known to Radegund and she was one of his supporters, the chances increase that he was also known to Fortunatus prior to his episcopate. The relevant couplet runs as follows.

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4 Reydellet 1:xiii, n. 22, and "Tours et Poitiers: Les relations entre Grégoire et Fortunat," in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois*, Actes du congrès international, Tours, 3–5 November 1994, (eds.) Nancy Gauthier and Henri Galinié (Tours, 1997), 159–160. Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge, 2001), 32–33, speaks of a meeting between Gregory and Fortunatus at the Austrasian court.

5 Gregory calls himself Julian's *alumnus* in *VJ* 50.

6 Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993), 63–64.

Quem patris Egidii Domino manus alma sacravit,
   ut populum recreet, quem Radegundes amet. (5.3.13–14)

The blessed hand of father Egidius consecrated him to the Lord,
   to relieve the people, for Radegund to love.

The verb *amet* is subjunctive, parallel to *recreet*. Both clauses express the purpose (and the anticipated outcome) of Egidius' consecration of Gregory. Just as he will bring refreshment to his people as bishop, so he will win the love of Radegund. Although this does not exclude Radegund's prior knowledge of Gregory, it is no evidence for it. In fact, because the support of the bishop of Tours was so important to the Convent of the Holy Cross in light of the hostility of the local bishop Maroveus,[7] it seems more likely that the initiative for the poem came from Radegund in the hope of getting relations with the new occupant of the see of Tours off to a good start. He is to be a bishop "fit for Radegund to love." Consequently the most plausible hypothesis is that Fortunatus' acquaintance with Gregory dates from around the time of his elevation to the episcopate.

Certainly all the poems Fortunatus wrote to or for Gregory date to after he became bishop. The poems contained in his first published collection (Books 1–7) must have been written between 573 and 576, the time-frame also of his *Life of Saint Martin*; those in Books 8 and 9 date to the late 570s or to the 580s. Poem 8.12, because of its content, can be precisely dated to 589. The poems collected in Book 10 are of various dates, but, as we have already seen, poem 10.11 probably belongs to the year 589, while poem 10.6 is a collection of epigrams for Gregory's newly rebuilt cathedral, on which work came to an end in 589/90.

Although many other bishops figure in Fortunatus' collected poetry, the poems to Gregory stand apart, and not just in terms of quantity. Typically Fortunatus' episcopal poems serve to praise a bishop, whether in the simple panegyric epigrams written for individual figures of northern Gaul or the more substantial and varied works of praise for Leontius of Bordeaux and Felix of Nantes, for each of whom he provided a dossier of poems (14 for Leontius, excluding his epitaph, 7, plus a prose letter, for Felix). By comparison in most of the poems to or for Gregory praise, at least of Gregory himself, is not a primary purpose. The main exceptions are 5.3, on his *adventus* into Tours, and the brief 5.4, on his *natalis dies*. The majority of the poems, in two sequences in

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7   Ibid., 30–41, and Georg Scheibelreiter, "Königstöchter im Kloster: Radegund (†587) und der Nonnenaufstand von Poitiers (589)," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 87 (1979), 11–14.

Books 5 and 8, take the form of verse epistles. Gregory apparently did not look to Fortunatus for poems of praise of the kind he had provided other Frankish bishops. On the other hand no other bishop receives more than two letters, whether in prose or verse, in the Fortunatan corpus.[8] This comparative wealth of personal poetry promises insight into the relationship between poet and patron.

In general Fortunatus' letters to Gregory are sparing in expressions of personal affection, at least by comparison with two poems to Ragnemod (3.26 and 9.10), whom the poet knew already before he became bishop of Paris, and with much of his correspondence with secular friends and patrons.[9] In a couple of passages he speaks of his love and friendship for Gregory, but without elaborating such language as he does elsewhere in his poetry.[10] There is certainly nothing of the warmth of emotional attachment that finds expression in his poems to Radegund and Agnes. He speaks of these two women as his spiritual mother and sister and invests the relationship with all the warmth of familial ties. By comparison Gregory is a father, but there is no suggestion of a similarly intimate bond. The word is part of the standard titulature of a bishop, communicating his authority among and protection of his Christian congregation.

Fortunatus' letters to Gregory display on a number of occasions the formality appropriate to addressing a bishop and superior. He styles himself as Gregory's servant or humble servant, language that finds its closest parallel in Fortunatus' corpus in two prose letters to Gregory's predecessor as bishop of Tours, Euphronius.[11] In both cases in the letters to Euphronius, this form of self-designation accompanies a request for the bishop to pray on the poet's behalf to Martin: the poet commends himself (*me commendans*) to the bishop's prayers. Six of the epistles to Gregory in Book 8 use the same language of personal commendation, though without the role of Martin as intermediary.[12] Such poems may be brief and simple in content: an address to the bishop,

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8   Bertram of Bordeaux (3.17 and 3.18), Avitus of Clermont (3.21 and 3.22), Ragnemod of Paris (3.26 and 9.10, but the former dates to before he became bishop), Euphronius of Tours (3.1 and 3.2, both prose), Felix of Nantes (3.4 and 5.7, the former in prose).

9   For Ragnemod, see Michael Roberts, *The Humblest Sparrow: The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus* (Ann Arbor, 2009), 250–252; for his secular correspondence, especially with Dynamius, Lupus, and Jovinus, ibid., 252–269.

10   5.8a.7 and 5.12.4; Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 271.

11   5.8a.5, 5.14.23, 8.16.5–6, 8.18.7 (*humilis* alone 8.14.5 and 8.15.11); in the letters to Euphronius 3.1.3 and 3.2.5.

12   8.14.5–6, 8.15.11–12, 8.16.5–6, 8.17.7–8, 8.18.7–8, 8.21.9–10. Other poems in Book 5 commend the poet to Gregory or conclude with a request for protection, but the language is not yet stereotyped.

expression of affection, and request for prayers on the poet's behalf (8.14, 8.16, 8.17). In such cases, in a manner familiar from late antique epistolary etiquette, it is sufficient to maintain the exchange of correspondence;[13] in Fortunatus' words "[to] perform the task of greeting in brief verses" ("versiculis brevibus soluo salutis opus," 8.17.6). Although no letters survive from Gregory to Fortunatus, the poet four times mentions receiving such letters (5.17, 8.14.3–4, 8.21.1–4, and 9.6.1–2) and expresses his hope that the bishop's practice of writing to him continues (5.17.6). In one case Gregory's letter comes with a gift of hides for making shoes (8.21), in another with a request for Fortunatus to try his hand at composing in the Sapphic meter and accompanied by a treatise on metrics (9.6, 9.7.33–36). We hear of letter carriers bringing letters from the poet to Gregory. Likewise *portitores* will have traveled in the other direction.[14] It may be that the insistent letter-carrier (*instans portitor*) who impatiently waits for Fortunatus' poem on Bishop Avitus' conversion of the Jews of Clermont – a poem commissioned by Gregory – came from the bishop of Tours, though Fortunatus also has recourse elsewhere to the same motif to explain the brevity or alleged inadequacy of a poem.[15]

It comes as no surprise that the poet also visited Tours in person. His poetry attests to one such visit. The verse epistle informs Gregory of his safe arrival back in Poitiers with his 'mothers', Radegund and Agnes, after a treacherous journey over icy roads (5.11). He takes the opportunity to convey their, as well as his own, respects to Gregory (5.11.9–10).[16] More revealing perhaps are two occasions on which he apologizes for being unable to travel to Tours. In the first case (5.9) he has received an invitation from Gregory to come to Tours, but is prevented from doing so by Gregory's brother in rank (*frater honore*), that is, as Tardi first suggested, Bishop Maroveus of Poitiers, whose hostility to the community of nuns presumably extended to their close confidant Fortunatus.[17] On a second, later occasion Fortunatus must make his excuses for being unable to attend the annual festival of St. Martin (8.11). A fever has kept him in his bed. The situation evokes a virtuoso display of verbal fireworks, full of puns, paradoxes, and antitheses: for instance, "I was all burning, a mournful funeral pyre,

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13   See Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 248–249.

14   Poems 5.8.9, 5.8b.9–10, 8.17.3, and 10.12a.5; in prose 8.12a and the dedicatory letter to the *Life of Saint Martin* (1).

15   References to an *instans portitor* occur both in the prose letter that accompanies Fortunatus' poem and in the verse epilogue (139) addressed to Gregory. See also 7.10.19 and, though in different language, the dedicatory letter to the *Life of Saint Martin* (1).

16   So too 5.9.13–14.

17   D. Tardi, *Fortunat: Étude sur un dernier représentant de la poésie latine dans la Gaule mérovingienne* (Paris, 1927), 140.

a fiery furnace, and in my fibers fever hid, all too apparent."[18] The verbal extravagance recalls some of the language used of Martin's miracles in Fortunatus' verse Life of the saint. There it serves to enhance the wonder-working power of the saint. But in a description of the poet's own symptoms and a quite different literary context it is hard not to see an element of parody, a sort of Christian mock-heroic. I would like to think Gregory would have been amused by his friend's over-the-top account of his medical symptoms. His failure to attend Martin's festival – perhaps Fortunatus customarily did so – would be forgotten and forgiven.

Although Fortunatus' verse epistles to Gregory do not primarily sing the bishop's praises, the formulas of address and epithets with which such poems begin allow the development of a titulature that combines conventional elements with some that are more distinctive to Gregory. For instance, though *pater* or *alme pater* (*pater alme*) is a conventional form of address to a bishop, only Gregory and Ragnemod, Fortunatus' close friend and bishop of Paris, are titled *beate pater* and the same couple alone receive the title *pater patriae*.[19] Fortunatus uses the paronomastic expression *sacer arce*, sacred in eminence, three times in his poetry (5.8.3, 5.13.1, 8.16.5), only of Gregory, and a second anagrammatic play on words between *culmen* and *lumen* finds similarly restricted usage (5.8.1, 5.12.2).[20] The metaphors in *culmen* and *lumen*, of elevation in status and brilliance of person and spiritual illumination, are in themselves quite hackneyed. But the play on words locks the two together in a mutually complementary unified image. Fortunatus is adept at developing such apparently unpromising metaphors and in a later poem to Gregory (8.15.1-5, 8) he subjects these images to virtuoso variations. The bishop is addressed as "lofty and universal height" ("celsum et generale cacumen") and "summit of Tours" ("Toronicensis apex"). He comes bringing light (*lumen*) from the Auvergne, described as highlands, but which he exceeds in height. Settling in the low-lying plain of Tours he stands out as "the people's tower" ("publica turris"), providing spiritual and implicitly physical security. Gregory's figure takes on iconic dimensions. The combination of light and height that he brings to the people of Tours finds expression in the second couplet of the poem, where the bishop

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18   "Fervor eram totus, tristis rogus, igne caminus, / febris in fibris stabat operta patens" (8.11.11–12).

19   *Pater patriae*: 5.10.1, 8.15.1, 8.16.3, 8.21.6 (9.10.1, of Ragnemod); *beate pater*: 5.9.14, 8.14.1 (9.10.7, of Ragnemod).

20   Fortunatus also uses the phrase *venerabilis arce sacerdos* (5.16.1) of Gregory, with the same paronomasia. The play on *culmen* and *lumen* also occurs in poem 9.8 to Baudoald, Bishop of Meaux. This is not an independent composition, however, but identical with 5.12.

becomes a lighthouse (*pharus*), illuminating the people with the beam of his countenance/speech ("qui inlustrans populos spargeris ore pharus"). The image of the lighthouse collapses together the metaphors of light and height.

In Fortunatus' poetry only Saint Martin otherwise is compared with a lighthouse.[21] The coincidence is unlikely to be accidental. In poems to or about Gregory, the bishop's illustrious predecessor often finds mention. Martin has handed over his "sheep" to Gregory, as if by direct transmission, for him to care for; the two in unison "lead their flocks through the sheepfolds and flowering meadows of Christ" ("nunc quoque per caulas et florea pascua Christi/rite gubernantes ducitis ambo greges"), Gregory presumably by his teaching and pastoral care, Martin as special patron of the Christian community of Tours (5.9.3–6).

In this case the poet's aim seems only to be to compliment Gregory. But generally he deploys the model of Martin for other rhetorical purposes beyond simple praise, most often to further a petition. In an appeal to Gregory to rescue a daughter who has been unjustly taken from her parents, Fortunatus reflects that "if holy Martin had been present" ("si pius hic...praesens Martinus adesset," 5.14.17), this situation would not have occurred. The evocation of Martin brings to mind the saint's successor "who," Fortunatus tells him, "in your holiness recall the trust your predecessor inspired" ("spem praecessoris qui pietate refers," 5.14.20). The poet's plea for Gregory's intervention derives force from the invocation of the model of Martin. The bishop is challenged to live up to that role. Later in a similar case once again Fortunatus appeals to Gregory to restore a father to a daughter by citing his predecessor's example. Just as Martin "continually restores sight to the blind by his merits," so Gregory is to bring back daylight (*dies*) to the bereaved father by returning his daughter to him (10.12a.9–10).[22] In these comparisons with Martin there is an element of ingratiation – Gregory is complimented by the likeness – but rhetorically they fulfill a persuasive function, reflected grammatically by the accompanying imperatives. In laudatory mode Fortunatus would represent the assimilation to Martin as an accomplished fact.

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21   10.7.7 and *Vita Sancti Martini* 1.49. The reference in the *Vita* is particularly significant. It comes right at the beginning of the narrative in a poem certainly written before 8.15, confirming the probability of an intratextual relationship.

22   "Iugiter ille sacris meritis inluminat orbos; / orbato hanc patri redde videndo diem." The appeal derives further rhetorical force from the play on words between *orbos*, here meaning 'blind' (*ThLL* 9:927.74–928.3), and *orbatos*, 'bereaved.' On these passages see Brian Brennan, "Being Martin: Saint and Successor in Sixth-Century Tours," *Journal of Religious History* 21 (1997), 133–134.

One further poem makes a similar appeal. Fortunatus writes to Gregory urging him to intervene energetically (*laborare*) in the disturbances at the convent of Poitiers that followed Radegund's death "in the manner of the saintly Martin, whose eminence you occupy, thereby making Martin present (*repraesentes*) in our time" (8.12.6–7).[23] Here, perhaps more explicitly than elsewhere, Gregory, at least if he answers Fortunatus' request favorably, reincarnates Martin in his own person. Although in this case Gregory is to make Martin present by his actions, the effect of *repraesentatio* more often is achieved by visual means. Quintilian (8.3.61) uses the word as a synonym for *enargeia* or *evidentia*, the quality of visual immediacy that makes the subject of a speech present before the eyes of its audience. This technical usage reminds us that Martin was indeed present in images in Gregory's cathedral. Fortunatus wrote a cycle of epigrams (10.6) to accompany the paintings with which Gregory decorated the new building. Most prominent among them, in all probability close to the altar, was an image of Martin celebrating mass, a ball of fire above his head, his hand cloaked in jewels (10.6.5–10, based on Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogues* 2.1–2 and 3.10.6).[24] As Gregory himself conducted mass in the vicinity of this painting, the identification of the bishop with his predecessor would be unavoidable. Repetition of gesture and ceremonial would reinforce the assimilation, creating the effect of *repraesentatio*, suspending temporal distinctions and making Martin present before the congregation's eyes in the here and now.

One further poem from the verse epistles of Book 8 invokes the model of Martin (8.20). The reference differs from all others in that it celebrates not Gregory's actions, or hoped-for actions, as bishop, but an act of personal kindness to the poet. The poem is the last in a series of three lauding Gregory's munificence.[25] Fortunatus has received from the bishop the gift of a small

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23   "Tu tamen, alme pater, pietatis amore labora/ut sacer antistes, culmina cuius habes, / unde repraesentes Martinum in tempore sacrum" (8.12.5–7). The sense of *in tempore* is not entirely clear. Reydellet (2:154) translates 'forever' (*à jamais*), but this does not seem appropriate for the secular associations of *tempus*. I think, with *repraesentes*, it must mean 'in the (present) time.'

24   For a fuller discussion see Michael Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 193–195. Brian Brennan, "Text and Image: 'Reading' the Walls of the Sixth-Century Cathedral of Tours," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 6 (1996), 77–78, argues for the prominence of this image and its location near the altar. For Sulpicius' works, see the editions of Jacques Fontaines in Sources chrétiennes 133–135 (Paris, 1967–69) and 510 (Paris, 2006).

25   All three poems prominently contain the word *munificus* (8.18.5, 8.19.1, 8.20.1), strongly suggesting they go together. Poem 8.18 is more general in its language and has not always been taken with the other two.

property (*agellus*, 20.5), close by the river Vienne.[26] Although the first poem of the sequence (8.18) denies that even Virgil could do justice to Gregory's generosity, in poem 8.20 Fortunatus successfully summons a culturally prestigious precedent for that act of charity, Martin. As the saint bestowed his cloak on a poor beggar (Sulpicius Severus, *Life of Saint Martin* 3), so Gregory has relieved the poverty of his friend Fortunatus with the gift of an estate (8.20). By characterizing himself as poor and comparing himself to a beggar, the poet shows an appropriate degree of modesty. In this non-episcopal context Gregory is not directly identified with Martin. Instead the bishop repeats his predecessor's acts ("munifici reparans Martini gesta"), as a pupil (*discipulus*) following a teacher (*magister*) or a foot-soldier (*miles*) a general (*dux*). The use of such exempla to elevate individual actions is a familiar rhetorical practice. In another era they would be derived from mythology or Greek or Roman history. In this case Fortunatus can be sure that Gregory knows how the story continues. That night Martin had a vision of Christ cloaked in his cloak. The poet clearly insinuates that just as Martin can expect heavenly reward for his act of charity, so Gregory can look forward to similar recompense for his kindness.

The gift of Fortunatus 'little estate' represents the most spectacular instance of Gregory's generosity to the poet. (Other poems speak of apples and cuttings [5.13] and skins for making shoes [8.21].) In my reconstruction that relationship probably began around the time of Gregory's elevation to the episcopate in 573, perhaps promoted by the women of the convent of Poitiers, eager to enlist the support of the new bishop. By that time Fortunatus' association with the convent was of long standing. It cannot have taken long, though, for Gregory to appreciate the poet's worth. By 576, when his first books of poems were published, at Gregory's insistence according to Fortunatus, the collection bore ample witness to the mutual regard between the two men in the verse correspondence and in the poems written at the bishop's request or in his interests. The same period saw the composition of the *Life of Saint Martin*, equipped with a dedicatory letter to Gregory. Subsequent books show a similar pattern. Gregory again calls upon Fortunatus to compose *tituli*, for his newly restored cathedral and for an oratory at Artanne. It is significant that his

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26   Poem 8.20 (line 2) refers to Gregory's gift of food. In the context that must mean crops from the *agellu*s which is the subject of the poem. Brian Brennan, "The Career of Venantius Fortunatus," *Traditio* 41 (1985), 72–73, points out that in poem 9.6 Fortunatus excuses himself from immediately responding to Gregory's request for a poem in the Sapphic meter on the grounds that he is preoccupied with the harvest on his small property ("modici dum seges urguet agri," 9.6.10). This is presumably the *agellus* Gregory had given him.

second published collection, Books 8 and 9, also contains a core of letters to Gregory, twenty-two in all, prominently positioned after poems concerning Radegund and the Convent of the Holy Cross. Fittingly, Fortunatus' last datable poem celebrates once more an episcopal election, this time of Plato, Gregory's archdeacon, to the bishopric of Poitiers in 591 (10.14). Gregory, Fortunatus implies, is instrumental in the elevation of his pupil and he happily anticipates a spirit of cooperation between the two sees (10.14.9–12). Martin sends his foster-child (*alumnus*), Plato, to worship and receive the protection of Hilary (10.14.3–4), just as earlier Julian of Brioude had sent his foster-child, Gregory, to Martin (5.3.11–12).

Marc Reydellet has argued that Gregory urged Fortunatus to publish his poetry as a kind of manifesto to support the bishop's actions and the causes with which he sympathized.[27] At a high level of generality this may be true, in that Fortunatus' poetry promotes Frankish saints and bishops and, at least in his first collection, celebrates the Austrasian court at Metz, where Gregory's sympathies lay. On the other hand, with the exception of 5.3 and 5.4, no poems are devoted entirely to his praise, even if the content of the verse correspondence and the record of his activities in founding or restoring church buildings redound to his credit. In only one case does Gregory seek from Fortunatus a poem of praise, and that is for Avitus of Clermont, his friend and teacher. To weigh against that is the dossier of poems and a prose letter to Felix of Nantes, with whom, to judge from the *Histories* (5.5), Gregory was not on the best of terms.

In one poem Fortunatus has been seen to be directly serving the interests of Gregory, even though Gregory himself is not mentioned in it. That is the panegyric he wrote for King Chilperic (9.1), composed according to the superscription for the council of Berny-Rivière called by the king, where Gregory was accused of having spread slanderous rumors about the queen, Fredegund (*Hist.* 5.49). The purpose of the poem and the particular juncture in the proceedings at which it was delivered have been the subject of some debate. Gregory himself makes no mention of Fortunatus in his account of the council. The poem begins with a four-line address to the bishops, who had been summoned to judge Gregory's case. Fortunatus seeks their support. It is a probable inference that they, and Gregory with them, have requested the poem. Fortunatus makes no attempt to address the circumstances of the case. The poem follows broadly the structure of a panegyric, with praise of the king's ancestry, a narrative section devoted to Chilperic's securing of his kingdom, and sections on his virtues of bravery, primarily in defence of his kingdom, justice, and learning. The main body of the poem ends with praise of his wife,

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27   Reydellet, "Tours et Poitiers," 160–161.

Fredegund. In typical Fortunatan fashion the tricky issue of Chilperic's feuding with his brothers is glossed over with generalized abstract language (41–54).[28] Although some topics have a bearing on the trial (the praise of the king's justice and of his wife), the poem generally celebrates Chilperic as a good ruler – an achieved status, not one to which he is to aspire. This is consistent with Fortunatus' normal practice in his poetry of praise, which presents systems of order that owe their existence to a benign bishop or ruler. That is the value of his poetry for his patrons. They present the world as they would like it to be seen, not necessarily as it truly was. In all probability, then, the poem was delivered at the end of the proceedings and served to celebrate restoration of order and to seal the renewed compact between the king and the bishops who had commissioned Fortunatus' poem.[29]

The appeal of Fortunatus' poem may lie in its medium as well as its content. Verse panegyric has a scarcity value in the world of Merovingian Gaul. There is symbolic capital to be gained by being celebrated in Fortunatus' elegiac couplets. The poet, so closely associated with Gregory, is, as it were, seconded to the court of Chilperic. He follows the panegyric with a group of four poems occasioned by the deaths of the royal couple's sons, Chlodobert and Dagobert, which, according to Gregory, followed some twenty days after the council at Berny-Rivière ended (*Hist.* 5.50). It is perhaps not too far-fetched to imagine that Chilperic, an aspiring poet himself, who is praised by Fortunatus in the panegyric for his learning, took special satisfaction in seeing his name celebrated in this way.

Gregory too appreciated Fortunatus' poetic talents. Indeed the relationship between the two of them had some of the qualities of that between a poet and his patron. It cannot have escaped Fortunatus' notice that by giving him a small estate (*agellus*) Gregory was mimicking, if on a smaller scale, the

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28   See Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 243 (Rome 1981), 312. Fortunatus employs the same technique in writing of the death of Galswintha (6.5.247–254).

29   See Franca Ela Consolino, "Poesia e propaganda da Valentiniano III ai regni romanobarbarici (secc. v–vi)," in *Letteratura e propaganda nell' occidente latino da Augusto ai regni romanobarbarici*, (ed.) Franca Ela Consolino (Rome, 2000), 223–224. Reydellet, "Tours et Poitiers," 162, also believes the poem closed the council. Judith W. George's argument, *Venantius Fortunatus: A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul* (Oxford, 1992), 54, that Fortunatus' poem "make[s] an active political contribution to the situation" and "influence[s] decisions" is inherently improbable and depends at times on a rather forced reading of the text.

generosity of Maecenas to the Augustan poet Horace. (Fortunatus knew Horace's poetry well.) Horace describes his Sabine farm once as an *agellus* (*Ep.* 1.14.1); it is the favorite word of the epigrammatist Martial for his property at Nomentanum. The choice of gift suggests perhaps that Gregory especially cherished Fortunatus' poetic abilities. Reydellet, in writing of the relationship between the two, emphasizes their like-mindedness on matters human and divine.[30] But I would like to suggest that it was Fortunatus' medium as much as his message that appealed to Gregory. In what remains of this chapter I will try to support that assertion.

2.3   A Poet for the Times

Almost a century ago, in a fundamental study of Gregory of Tours' familiarity with classical literature, Godefroid Kurth observed that the bishop had a special liking for poetry.[31] To this liking he attributed the recurrent presence of Virgil in Gregory's writings, whether as direct citations or verbal reminiscences. Gregory apparently was well acquainted with the *Aeneid*, at least the first eight books, although he shows no similar familiarity with other classical poets. Christian poetry, though, leaves a pronounced impression on his writings. In particular he values the work of Prudentius, Paulinus of Nola, and Paulinus of Périgueux (like Fortunatus he does not distinguish between the two Paulinuses). Gregory's account of the life and miracles of Felix of Nola (*GM* 103) briefly summarizes the content of relevant sections of four poems of Paulinus of Nola (15, 16, 18, and 23); the *VM* begins (1.2) with a similar summary of the posthumous miracles of Martin recorded in the sixth book of Paulinus of Périgueux' verse Life. Gregory mentions also an epitaph of Sidonius Apollinaris as source for Abbot Abraham of Clermont (*VP* 3.1) and his account of the martyrdom of Cassian of Imola (*GM* 42) clearly derives from Prudentius' *Peristephanon* 9, though he does not mention the source. A two-line inscription from a church in Vienne (*VJ* 2) provides evidence that the body of the martyr Ferreolus and the head of Julian share the same tomb. In all these cases poetry furnishes valuable information for Gregory's hagiographical narratives. Only Prudentius figures in other contexts, praising the cross (*GM* 105; *Cathemerinon* 6.133–36), describing a comet (*CS* 34; *Cathemerinon* 12.21–24, somewhat garbled), and in a

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30   Ibid., 159–167.

31   Godefroid Kurth, "Grégoire de Tours et les études classiques au VIe siècle," in idem, *Études franques*, 2 vols (Paris, 1919), 1: 28.

twice-quoted maxim characterizing the greed for gold (*VP* 6 prol.; *GC* 110: *Hamartigenia* 257).[32]

On three occasions Gregory not only summarizes in his own words the content of a verse passage, but also cites the original text he is following: one passage describes the failure of a sacrifice performed for Julian the Apostate, because of the presence of a Christian in the emperor's bodyguard (*GM* 40; Prudentius, *Apoth*eosis 449–502); in a second instance Gregory quotes Prudentius' lines on the miracles accompanying the martyrdom of Saints Emeterius and Chelidonius of Calahorra (*GM* 92; *Peristephanon* 1.82–90); the last verse inset is taken from Fortunatus' poem on a miracle performed posthumously by the power of St. Lawrence during the reconstruction of a church at Brioni in Italy (*GM* 41; *Carm.* 9.14.1–2 and 11–18). In this case Gregory speaks of excerpting the verses most relevant to the miracle from the longer poem. His quotation of Prudentus' *Apotheosis* similarly abbreviates the original.

Gregory values the work of earlier Christian poets, especially as a source for the history of the Church. In the *GM* exclusively he quotes their poetry directly. He explains his reasons most fully in the context of the longest verse passage, from Prudentius' *Apotheosis*: the verses are intended "to prevent his account from seeming incredible" ("quae relatio ne cui fortassis videatur incredula") and "to corroborate [his] narrative" ("ad haec quae narravi confirmanda"). The other two verse quotations, from Prudentius' *Peristephanon* and Fortunatus serve the same purpose. Each is described as a *testimonium* by Gregory; that is, to adopt (and somewhat adapt) the definition in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, each "corroborates that something is as the author says it is" ("testimonio esse illud ita ut nos dicimus confirmatur," 4.3.5). The implication, I take it, is that Fortunatus, as an Italian himself, is a credible informant for Lawrence's miracle, as Prudentius, a 4th-century Spanish poet, lends authority to the miracles he reports.[33] Beyond that a *testimonium*, in addition to being evidence for the credibility of an action or event, can also witness to "a person's merits or services" (*OLD* s.v. 3). The Fortunatus passage at least, on the miracle of St. Lawrence, is equally a *testimonium* in this second sense, a kind of hymn to the saint's power.

Gregory also shows an interest in the technical process of versification. In the *Hist.* (6.46) he finds fault with the metrical failings of Chilperic's attempts

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32   For completeness' sake I should mention that Gregory cites in *CS* 14 four lines of a poem
      by "a certain Hilary," identified by Krusch as Hilary of Arles, on a fountain of water and
      fire.

33   Prudentius, *Apotheosis* 450, reports that he remembers the events there recorded from his
      boyhood.

at poetry. More strikingly poem 9.6 of Fortunatus records that Gregory requested of the poet a work in the Sapphic meter. Fortunatus duly complied. From the resulting composition it is clear that Gregory accompanied his request with a treatise on metrics (9.7.33–44) to encourage Fortunatus' endeavors. Gregory's possession of such a codex and his interest in prompting Fortunatus to metrical experimentation suggests a degree of poetic connoisseurship on the bishop's part.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that Gregory himself apparently tried his hand at verse. Fortunatus twice refers to poems of the bishop. In thanking Gregory for the gift of a property near the Vienne river Fortunatus reveals that the news of the gift came to him in verse, on "a page that your love gave voice to in melodious verse" ("pagina.../carmine dulcifluo quam tuus edit amor," 8.19.1–2). In a second case Gregory's poetry seems to have been religious in subject matter: "Reading sacred songs and composing them by your own inspiration, you win a palm in common with others, my father" ("carmina diva legens proprioque e pectore condens/participans aliis fit tibi palma, parens," 5.8b.1–2).[34] Without further detail it is impossible to be more precise about the nature of Gregory's compositions. Perhaps they were hymns intended for liturgical singing rather than more learned compositions. Fortunatus was interested in collecting such materials for the convent at Poitiers (see 8.1). When all is said and done, Gregory's ventures in writing poetry may have been rather slight. But this dabbling in verse composition is one more expression of his interest in poetry, especially poetry of Christian content.

It is consistent with this interest that at the end of the *Histories* (10.31) Gregory countenances the possibility of rewriting some part of his work in verse: "If anything in these writings pleases you I do not forbid you to write it in verse, provide you retain the content" (*salvo opere nostro*). This contrasts with his absolute prohibition on breaking up the text or rewriting it in prose. Gregory's wording is reminiscent of the account by Quintilian of the school exercise of paraphrasing in prose a poetic text, which is to be achieved "while retaining the sense of the poet" (*salvo poetae sensu*, 1.9.2).[35] There is no reason to think that Gregory knew this text, but it does provide a suggestive parallel. Quintilian is talking about rewriting sections of verse in prose, Gregory sections of prose in verse. A second passage, the prologue to the *GC*, also talks of

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34   See Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 279–280, for a discussion of this passage and the poem as a whole, which presents some problems of interpretation.

35   On this passage see Michael Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity*, ARCA. Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 16 (Liverpool, 1985), 14–16.

turning some of his writings into poetry. His addressees, impeccably trained in the arts of grammar and rhetoric, will be able to "expand at greater length [his writings] in refined and brilliantly composed verse."[36] Despite the pervasive tone of irony in Gregory's characterization of such *litterati*, the description of the stylistic differences between prose and verse is quite accurate. Gregory's own prose paraphrases of poetic texts from Prudentius in the GM generally are briefer and syntactically simpler than their originals, despite the occasional influence of the poetic idiom of the source text on Gregory's prose style.[37] Gregory apparently felt that verse was a sufficiently different compositional mode from prose and had sufficiently distinctive, yet valuable, qualities that a verse rewriting of his work, or parts of it, was acceptable in the way a prose version was not.

There is one other instance where the possibility of versifying Gregory's prose is raised. In the prologue to Book 1 of the VM he wishes that Sulpicius Severus or Paulinus (of Périgueux) were still living or Fortunatus were present so that the task of recording Martin's posthumous miracles did not fall to him. In actual fact Gregory did request that Fortunatus versify his work. In the dedicatory letter to the poet's *Vita sancti Martini* Fortunatus mentions the request and asks for a copy of the work to be sent to him (at this date it will have only been Book 1).[38] In the end, as Gregory indicates, no poetic version was forthcoming. But the exchange dramatizes the high regard the bishop had for Fortunatus' poetry, as worthy to stand in a tradition of Christian Latin poetry Gregory admired. In what follows I will try to identify in more detail what particular qualities Fortunatus brought to his poetry, as a *litteratus* in Frankish Gaul, that will have appealed to the bishop.

One place to begin is the poem describing the posthumous miracle of St. Lawrence that Gregory included in the GM (41). Before quoting a portion of the poem, Gregory gives his own version of the story. It is circumstantially detailed and with a logical narrative progression: a church's roof has fallen in, the locals go into a forest and cut down trees for timber, which they transport back on wagons. Finding a beam is too short the priest prays to Lawrence and he miraculously increases it in length, so much so that the excess is available

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36   "Haec scripta praebebunt scilicet ut quod nos inculte et breviter stilo nigrante discribi-
       mus, vos lucide ac splendide stante versu in paginis prolixioribus dilatetis."

37   Compare, for instance, the relatively matter-of-fact account of the miracle of the ring and
       handkerchief (*orarium*) in the martyrdom of Emeterius and Chelidonius (GM 92), with
       the nine verses covering the same subject in Gregory's source, Prudentius.

38   For the issues concerning dating see Solange Quesnel, *Venance Fortunat, Oeuvres t. 4: Vie
       de Saint Martin* (Paris, 1996), 105–106.

for relics that have the power to work miracles of healing. Here is Gregory's account of the central miracle: "Immediately to the astonishment of all the beam grew to such a length that a large part had to be cut off."[39]

Apart from an introductory couplet the lines cited from Fortunatus concentrate on the central miracle and subsequent healings performed by splinters from the miraculously extended beam. Fortunatus omits almost entirely the context of the event, contenting himself with "the people were rebuilding a church" ("dum tua templa novant…plebes," 11). Instead the focus is on the miraculous:

> Dum tua templa novant breviori robore plebes,
>   creveruntque trabes crevit et alma fides.
> Stipite contracto tua se mercede tetendit:
>   quantum parva prius, postea caesa fuit.
> Crescere plus meruit succisa securibus arbor
>   et didicit sicca longior esse coma. (9.14.11–16)

> When a people were rebuilding your church the timber was too short,
>   but a beam grew in length, and along with it their loving faith.
> The wood was shrunken, but by your bounty it lengthened:
>   a piece was cut off as small as had been its whole length before.
> A tree that was cut down by axes was able to increase in size
>   and learnt to become longer, though its foliage was withered and dry.

The account is very different from Gregory's sober recital. Fortunatus can be said to have "expanded at greater length" the miracle account "in refined and brilliantly composed verse." All but the first and last lines contain antitheses, paradoxical in the case of lines 13 and 15: the shrunken wood lengthened, the tree grew when cut down. Line 12 also shows a favorite pattern of Fortunatus, with rhyme between the two halves of the line, which correspond to the two antithetical syntactical units. The whole is a lingering meditation on the miraculous nature of the event. Fortunatus' style is not a mindless surrender to unrestrained word play and verbal self-indulgence but an attempt to find an idiom that does justice to the miraculous in the miracle.[40] In so doing it complements Gregory's historical narrative, while serving a different purpose. It is

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39   "Ilico cunctis attonitis trabes crevit in tanto spatio longitudinis ut necesse esset partem magnam incidi."

40   For similar techniques in Fortunatus' *Life of Saint Martin* see Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 213–222.

a *testimonium*, in that with almost lyric exuberance it evokes the nature-defying effects of the saint's miraculous power.

In one case Fortunatus explicitly mentions that he is versifying an account provided to him by Gregory, in his poem in praise of Avitus of Clermont for his conversion of the city's Jews (5.5b).[41] The letter to Gregory that accompanies the poem concludes: "In a spirit of obedient devotion and dedicated service, let the instructions you have given me out of your love in praise of the above-mentioned bishop be sung in his honor" ("Obsequella morigeri, servitute devoti, quod a vobis in laude praedicti pontificis amore praecipitur honore cantetur" 5.5a, 2). Presumably the *praecepta* in question included Gregory's summary of the events that Fortunatus is to convert into a song honoring Avitus. These same events were later to be related by Gregory in his *Histories* (5.11), though with some variations of narrative detail.[42]

In all likelihood Gregory supplied Fortunatus with a straightforward narrative of the kind that describes the posthumous miracle of Saint Lawrence in the *GM*. If he provided the poet with an estimation of the number of converts or the details that the baptism took place in an extramural baptistery and that some Jews migrated to Marseilles rather than accepting conversion – all present in Gregory's later account in the *Histories* – Fortunatus ignored that material. Instead Fortunatus composes a kind of *speculum episcopi*, with Avitus the exemplary bishop triumphantly securing civic unity with the baptism of the new converts, who now join a single flock united under his pastoral care.[43] He simplifies the narrative to three stages: the day of Christ's ascension, when the synagogue is destroyed and Avitus urges the Jewish community to convert

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41   The episode has attracted a good deal of scholarly attention: Brian Brennan, "The Conversion of the Jews of Clermont in AD 576," *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1985), 321–337; Walter Goffart, "The Conversions of Avitus of Clermont, and Similar Passages in Gregory of Tours," in "*To See Us as Others See Us*": *Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity*, (eds.) Jacob Neusner and Ernst R. Frerichs (Chico, 1985), 473–497 = Walter Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After* (London, 1989), 293–317; Marc Reydellet, "La conversion des juifs de Clermont en 576," in *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes, Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, (eds.) Luis Holtz and Jean-Claude Fredouille, Collection des Études augustiniennes, série antiquité 132, 2 vols (Paris, 1992), 1:371–379; E.M. Rose, "Gregory of Tours and the Conversion of the Jews of Clermont," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden, 2002), 307–320.

42   Most prominently Gregory reports an earlier incident omitted by Fortunatus when a member of the Jewish community poured rancid oil (*oleum foetidum*) on the head of a recently baptized convert. Fortunatus records that the final conversion followed a threat of violence (75–78), of which Gregory makes no mention.

43   For the emphasis on this theme see Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 48–49.

(27–72); the Jews' decision to convert and its announcement to Avitus (73–104); and baptism of the converts at Pentecost (105–122). The first stage departs from the version of the *Histories* in two respects: Avitus directly addresses the Jewish community rather than sending spokespersons (*legati*) and he makes the speech the same day as the destruction of the synagogue (*ista dies*, 62); in Gregory it is on a different day (*alia die*). In part this process allows for focusing on spiritually salient detail to the exclusion of potentially distracting extraneous material. It is comparable to the exclusion of circumstantial detail in the Lawrence miracle. But Fortunatus' treatment also depends for its conceptual unity on a biblical episode, the story of Pentecost (Acts 2).[44] Like Peter and the apostles there, Avitus is inspired by the Holy Spirit, which "distilled on his lips, speaks through its servant, the bishop, to increase the number of his flock" (13–14).[45] Avitus' divinely inspired eloquence is crucial to the conversion (23–24, 93–94, 97–98). For that reason, in Fortunatus' account, but not Gregory's, the bishop delivers a lengthy speech of some theological learning, urging the Jews to convert, as Peter addresses the same audience and with the same purpose in Acts.[46] Avitus thereby reenacts in the church of Clermont a foundational moment in the history of the Church and of the prototype bishop Peter.

Fortunatus' poem begins with a prologue addressed to Christ and God (1–12) that already in its choice of language evokes the scene at Pentecost. It describes the divine inspiration that all bishops enjoy in preaching the faith: they are "set on a candlestick" – the image derives from the Gospels (Matt. 5:15, Mark 4:21, Luke 8:16) – and "from their brilliant speech (or 'brilliant countenance') the holy house is to shine bright, gleaming with the fire of their teaching" ("supra candelabrum positi, quorum ore corusco/dogmatis igne micans luceat alma domus," 7–8).[47] The association of fire with speech recalls the tongues of fire in the biblical story (Acts 2:3). In Fortunatus it is the brilliance of light that fills the holy house (i.e., the church), in the Bible the sound of the arrival of the Holy Spirit fills the whole house where the apostles are sitting (Acts 2:2 – *domus*

44　See Brennan, "Conversion of the Jews," 331–332. The Pentecost story also helps to frame Gregory's narrative. His notice of the number of Jews converted recalls the similar notice in Acts (2:41).

45　"Spiritus alme, sacri labiis infusus Aviti, / per famulum loqueris, crescat ut ordo gregis."

46　For the theological learning, see Luce Pietri, "Venance Fortunat, lecteur des Pères latins," in *Chartae caritatis: Études de patristique et d'antiquité tardive en hommage à Yves-Marie Duval*, (eds.) B. Gain et al. (Paris, 2004), 135.

47　Fortunatus picks up the same language in the conclusion to his poem. Among the literal candles that burn at the baptism of the new converts, Avitus himself "casts his beams, glowing with the fire of the spirit suffused within him" ("Inter candelabros radiabat et ipse sacerdos / diffuso interius spiritus igne micans," 5.5b, 125–26).

in both texts). The episode of Avitus' conversion of the Jews becomes in this account an exemplary illustration of the deployment of the spiritual powers at a bishop's disposal. Alone of bishops in Fortunatus' corpus Avitus is given the title *vates* (79; cf. 5), suggesting that his preaching is in the tradition not only of the apostles, but also of the Old Testament prophets.[48]

By comparison with Gregory's account, Fortunatus shows himself neglectful of chronological sequence and documentary detail. His eye is on figural significance of the conversion story and the opportunities it offers for pointed expression. The two authors' versions of the destruction of the synagogue on the day of Christ's ascension illustrate the distinction.

First Gregory:

> Die autem beato, quo Dominus ad caelos post redemptum hominem gloriosus ascendit, cum sacerdos de aeclesiam ad basilicam psallendo procederet, inruit super sinagogae Iudeaeorum multitudo tota sequentium, distructamque a fundamentis, campi planitiae locus adsimilatur. (*Hist.* 5.11)

> On the happy day when the Lord ascended to heaven in glory after man's redemption, when the bishop was processing accompanied by psalms from the cathedral to a church, the whole band of his followers attacked the synagogue of the Jews and the site was leveled to its foundations, taking on the appearance of a flat plain.

Then Fortunatus:

> Venerat ergo dies Dominus qua est redditus astris
>   ac homo sidereum pendulus ivit iter.
> Plebs armante fide Iudaica templa revellit
>   et campus patuit quo synagoga fuit.
> Tempore quo Christi repedavit ad alta potestas,
>   ille quod ascendit, res inimica ruit. (5.5b.27–32)

> Then the day dawned on which the Lord returned to the stars
>   and as a man made his way to the heavens on high.
> The people, armed by their faith, tore down the shrine of the Jews
>   and where once was a synagogue, now was an open plain.
> At the season when Christ in his power reascended to heaven,
>   when he rose on high, the hostile forces were brought low.

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48 The word occurs in Fortunatus' writings only of the Old Testament prophets or of Christian poets.

Neither writer expresses reservations about the violence, though both represent Avitus as disavowing the use of force in the conversion.[49] Again Fortunatus excludes documentary detail, of the procession when the assault takes place, and concentrates on what for him is the edifying point. The passage is framed by references to Christ's ascension. What for Gregory is just a chronological detail becomes for Fortunatus the leitmotif that orders this short passage. Stylistically the lines display some characteristic features of the Fortunatan elegiac couplet. The last two pentameters (30 and 32) show the combination of antithesis (*campus:synagoga*; *ascendit:ruit*), rhyme, and short clauses corresponding to the two halves of the line that lend his elegiacs an aural predictability and sense of closure. Gregory apparently was impressed with the comparison of the site of the destroyed synagogue to a level plain. He takes it over (unless, as seems unlikely, it was in the original account of events he furnished Fortunatus for his poem). But Gregory's wording (*campi planitiae locus adsimilatur*) remains linear and open-ended, contrasting with the artful phrasing and self-enclosed structure of Fortunatus' verse.

These stylistic features of the Fortunatan elegiac couplet set him apart from his predecessors in the meter.[50] In some respects the poems on St. Lawrence and Avitus of Clermont considered so far are untypical of his corpus because they contain a substantial amount of narrative. Most of Fortunatus' poems are laudatory or celebratory.[51] In such poems the distinctive stylistic properties of his verse tend to be more pronounced. Here is a short section from a poem to Armentaria, Gregory's mother. He has just praised the good fortune of the mother of the Maccabees and goes on to compare Armentaria with her.

> Tu quoque prole potens, recte Armentaria felix,
>   nec minor ex partu quam prior illa sinu.
> Illa vetus numero maior, tu maxima solo;
>   quod poterant plures, unicus hoc tuus est.
> Fetu clara tuo, geniti circumdata fructu,
>   est tibi Gregorius palma, corona, decus. (10.15.5–10)

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49 "Vi ego vos confiteri Dei Filium non inpello" (*Hist.* 5.11); "Vis hic nulla premit, quo vis te collige liber" (5.5b.67). Fortunatus includes a clever play on words on the two senses of *vis*.

50 See Reydellet vol. l, XVI–LXVIII, for a presentation of the data; also Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 322–324.

51 The main exceptions are his personal poetry and the *Vita sancti Martini*. The latter, though primarily narrative, has a large element of praise and celebration.

You too are mighty in your son, Armentaria, deservedly fortunate,
  nor are you lesser in your offspring than she was in the past from her womb.
That woman of old was superior in number of children, you are supreme
    with just one;
  the power she derives from many a single son supplies for you.
Winning distinction from your progeny, enjoying benefits from your child,
  you have in Gregory your palm, crown, and glory.

In all of these lines there is rhyme or assonance between the two halves of the line.[52] Typically the division of the line into two halves coincides with a clause or sense break (the exception is line 7). The comparison with the mother of the Maccabees proceeds by a series of antitheses (*partu*: *sinu*; *illa maior*:*tu maxima*; *plures*:*unicus*). Variation derives from the placement of the antithetical elements and in line 7 the anomalous clause structure, with leonine rhyme but not homoeoteleuton.[53] The effect is a hymn-like litany of praise for Gregory's mother and indirectly for Gregory himself.

The style is suited to public as well as private celebration. Fortunatus' panegyric for Chilperic contains a comparable passage praising the king's military virtues.

Aspera non nocuit, sed te sors dura probavit:
  unde gravabaris, celsior inde redis.
Altior adsiduis crescis, non frangeris, armis
  et belli artificem te labor ipse facit.
Fortior efficeris per multa pericula princeps
  ac per sudores dona quietis habes. (9.1.61–66)

Harsh times did not hurt you, but cruel fortune proved you:
  borne down by burdens you come back the taller.
By continual warfare you grow in stature, not succumb,
  and struggle only makes you master of war.
You are made a bolder prince by your many perils
  and by the sweat of your brow you win the gifts of peace.

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52   In line 5 *potens* and *felix* rhyme in their final syllables. In late Latin an unstressed final *e*, long or short, and a short *i* were pronounced the same (József Herman, *Vulgar Latin*, trans. Roger Wright [University Park, PA, 2000], 34). For the treatment of consonant clusters see ibid., p. 47.

53   That is, one of the rhyming words does not come at the end of its clause.

Only the first couplet shows the characteristic division of the line at mid-point into separate, antithetical clauses. But in every case there is rhyme or assonance between the two halves of the line and in four lines organization of the structure and thought by antithesis (*nocuit:probavit*; *gravabaris:celsior redis*; *crescis:frangeris*; *sudores:dona quietis*). Sound and sense work together to communicate the king's virtues. This is poetry that had to be delivered aloud in order to for its qualities to be fully appreciated. In performance the reiterative patterns of language so characteristic of Fortunatus will have a quasi-liturgical hymn-like effect. If we are to imagine the poem recited in the presence of the king, the royal ceremony will perhaps have shared some of the qualities of a religious ritual.

In fact Fortunatus' poem on Avitus of Clermont may well have received a similar public performance, probably, as Brennan suggests, in that city not Tours.[54] The final words of Fortunatus' accompanying letter provide some support for this conjecture. He proposes that the subject matter Gregory provides him with "be sung in honor" of the bishop (*honore cantetur*). In Fortunatus' usage the verb *canto* and the noun *cantus* are never used, unlike the verb *cano*, simply of poetic composition. They always refer either to song or to the playing of a musical instrument. Fortunatus' choice of words suggests he imagines himself writing a composition that will be sung in some kind of ceremony honoring the bishop.

As Kurth says, Gregory shows a particular interest in poetry. Not only does he call on Christian poets as sources for his hagiographical works; he also betrays a degree of metrical connoisseurship and even tries his hand at writing poetry himself. In three passages he allows for the possibility of his own prose being turned into verse. A comparison of Gregory's prose texts on a posthumous miracle of St. Lawrence and on Avitus' conversion of the Jews at Clermont with Fortunatus' poetic versions of the same material provides a sense of the special qualities verse lent a narrative, at least when it came from Fortunatus' pen. Verse was a different compositional mode, with a different approach to the narrated event, thereby complementing rather than being a substitute for Gregory's prose.

In one case, *VM* Book 1, Gregory specifically approached Fortunatus to versify his prose. As an accomplished and versatile poet and Gregory's friend he was the natural person to turn to. He had no rival in Gaul.[55] Gregory, with his

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54   Brennan, "Conversion of the Jews," 326. See too Rose, "Gregory of Tours," 316–317.

55   See M. Manitius, *Geschichte der christlich-lateinischen Poesie bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1891), 470–473, for the meager evidence for contemporary poetic activity.

appreciation of poetry's value, will have been specially pleased to have Fortunatus at his disposal. But Fortunatus' appeal derived not simply from the mere fact of his being a poet; his poetry had special qualities, making it particularly well suited to the times. Gregory famously apologized for the *rusticitas* of his style, but at the same time defended it as accommodated to the understanding of his audience. Fortunatus makes a comparable statement in his prose *Life of Saint Albinus* (4.8).[56] Certain qualities of his verse point to his making a similar accommodation to the circumstances of reception in 6th-century Francia in his poetic compositions too. In the Fortunatan elegiac couplet the sense unit only very rarely extends over one line to the next. Often a line falls into distinctly marked halves, frequently corresponding to separate clauses, which may be reinforced by rhyme or assonance and/or regularly structured by the figures of antithesis and paronomasia. The effect is to identify a line as a discrete unit by repetition of sounds and the balancing of sense. For an audience no longer sensitive to the distinctions of quantity on which classical metrics depends these procedures introduce an element of predictability creating the expectation of a regular repetitive structure and allowing for the perception of such compositions as poetry.[57] If my analysis of Fortunatus' stylistics is correct, Gregory, with his sensitivity to the needs of a contemporary audience, will surely have valued these innovative poetic procedures.

2.4   Conclusion

Gregory's relationship to Fortunatus can be described as that of friend and patron. The exchange of correspondence between the two and the very

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56   "Eligo rusticus agnosci…ne mihi videlicet in hoc opere ad aures populi minus aliquid intellegibile proferatur." I quote Fortunatus' prose works from the edition of Bruno Krusch, *Venantii Honori Clementiani Fortunati presbyteri Italici Opera pedestria*, MGH AA 4.2 (Berlin, 1885). For this statement and the evidence or *rusticitas* in Fortunatus' prose hagiography see Richard Collins, "Observations on the Form, Language and Public of the Prose Biographies of Venantius Fortunatus in the Hagiograhy of Merovingian Gaul," in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, (eds.) H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford, 1981), 109–111. It is worth noting that in one passage Fortunatus gives a quite different sense of Gregory's prose style, at least in his letters, describing it as highly rhetorically refined: "Composed with outstanding skill, embellished with the trappings of style, and constructed with Sophoclean art, your rich page moistens my barrenness with its flood and endows my words with your eloquence," 8.21.1–4 ("Egregio conpacta situ, falerata rotatu, / atque Sophocleo pagina fulta sopho / me arentem vestro madefecit opima rigatu, / fecit et eloquio quod loquor esse tuo").

57   For a fuller discussion see Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*.

number of the verse epistles testify to that bond. If the poet is not effusive in expressions of personal affection, that is consistent with ancient notions of friendship. At the same time there is a clear disparity in status between the two figures. While the exchange of simple, inexpensive gifts is consistent with rough equality between a pair of friends, by presenting Fortunatus with a small property the bishop conforms more closely to the traditional role of literary patron.[58] The gift is a measure of the value Gregory put on his relationship with Fortunatus. On his side the poet composed poems commissioned by Gregory or to serve his interest and dedicated his first collection of poems and the *Life of Saint Martin* to the bishop. I have argued in the second part of this paper that Gregory's appreciation for poetry in general and for the poetic skills of Fortunatus in particular lay at the root of their relationship. This does not exclude the probability that in interests and sympathies the two were in broad accord. But one tenet they shared was the importance of writing in a way that was intelligible to and capable of being appreciated by a contemporary audience. Fortunatus' poems and Gregory's prose are quite different modes of literary composition but they both share a willingness to depart from traditional forms of expression to achieve their communicative purpose. Their literary abilities, especially in writing about the Church, its bishops, and its saints, are complementary but distinct.

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58   Of course, patron and friend were not mutually exclusive terms. They can be used of the same relationship, depending on which aspect receives emphasis.

PART 2

Composing the Works

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The Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours and Its Bearing on the Political Narrative

Alexander Callander Murray

3.1   Preliminary: The Books of the *Histories* and their Scope

Gregory finished writing his *Histories* in 594, the twenty-first year of his episcopate and, as it happened, the year of his death.[1] The *Histories* is a large, complicated work in ten books, the scope and contents of which are not easily mastered. It amounts to over 120,000 words in a language noted for its succinctness. Its text occupies 537 pages, including apparatus, in the standard Latin edition, and it takes a fat Penguin book of 540 pages to render its text in English.[2] It begins broadly as a kind of world history with biblical and secular material in the fashion of Jerome and Orosius, but by Book 2 soon begins to focus on Gaul in imperial times and comes down, by the end of Book 10 to 591, the sixteenth year of Childebert II, king of Austrasia. The chronological profile of the work deserves some consideration.

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1   Some of the conclusions and arguments of this paper were first presented in "Chronology and the Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1/1 (2008), 157–196, and others given in "The Political Perspective of Gregory of Tours' *Histories*," a talk delivered before the Medieval Academy of America's 85th Annual Meeting, Yale University, March, 2010. Cross-references below to Murray, "Chronology" will point readers to slightly more extensive discussions of individual points.

2   Fig. 3.1 gives some data based on word counts.

Book 1   Covers 5596 years from Creation to 397 and the death of Saint
                Martin, Gregory's hero and predecessor as bishop of Tours. (Martin
                remains a living force in the events of Gregory's own time.)
Book 2   Covers 114 years, from the death of Martin to the death of Clovis
                in 511, the founder of the Frankish kingdoms of Gregory's time.
Books 3 & 4   Cover 37 and 27 years respectively, encompassing 64 years and
                ending with the death of the Austrasian king Sigibert II in 575,
                the second year of Gregory's episcopate.
Books 5 to 10   Cover a mere 16 years from 575–591; these remaining 6 books are
                organized in annal form, based on the regnal dates of Childebert II,
                Sigibert's successor.

The dimensions of the books vary, though the disparities are modest to small. The books range in size from about 7500 words to well over 16,500. The small books are the first, dealing with biblical and imperial history and the early christianisation of Gaul; and the third, sketching out the reigns of the sons of Clovis from 511 to 548. The largest is Book 5, focussed on the couple, King Chilperic and his wife Queen Fredegund, but this covers five years (576–580). The rest of the books, all substantial, include much shorter periods of time. Book 6 comprises the last three years of Chilperic's reign, concluding near the end of 584. The period encompassed by Books 5 and 6 deals with the years 576–584 in which Chilperic was king over Tours. Book 7 covers less than a year and treats the Gundovald revolt. Books 8–10, each covering from less than two years to two years, brings the narrative down to 591. Books 7 and 8, dealing with the revolt of Gundovald, appear to be the epicentre of the narrative, Book 7 taking in about half a year, as does most of Book 8. Despite the prominence of the two arch villains Chilperic and Fredegund in Books 5 and 6 (and in the literature on the *Histories*), Gregory actually devotes two-thirds more coverage to the six years when Childebert II controlled Tours (from 585 onward) than on the almost nine years Chilperic was ruler.

    The simplest lesson to be learned from the above, straightened, account of the chronological distribution of Gregory's work is that the *Histories* is essentially a history of contemporary events. In fact, among Latin historians of the early Middle Ages, Gregory of Tours stands out as the most prolific recorder of such. Two-thirds of the *Histories*' contents deal with affairs from the end of 575, when Childebert II became king of Austrasia, down to 591. The skewed chronological profile this produces, with books down to Book 6 constantly
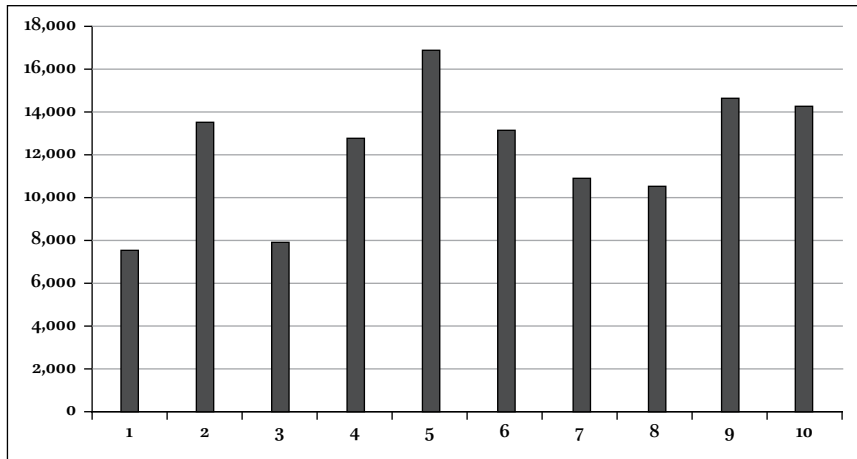
Bk	Words	No. of years	Scope
1	7502	5596	Creation to St †Martin ca 400
2	13460	114	ca 400 to † Clovis a. 511
3	7925	37	511 to to † Theudebert a. 548
4	12684	27	548 to † Sigibert I a. 575
5	16795	5	576–580
6	13070	3+	581–584 to † Chilperic
7	10989	<1	584–585
8	10607	<2	585–87
9	14506	2+	587–89
10	14328	2	590–91
Total	**121866**		

* The word counts are based on the substance of each chapter and a simple heading and do not include tables of contents or various preliminary matter in the MSS

FIGURE 3.1   *Word count of the books making up the Histories*

reflecting smaller and smaller chronological units is not unique, though its scope is hard to match in Antiquity. Two hundred years earlier, Ammianus Marcellinus, generally regarded as the last great classicizing Latin historian, produced a Latin history with the same telescoping feature; Ammianus' earlier books started with the reign of Nerva, picking up where Tacitus left off, but the burden of his narrative by far was the 4th century and especially

the reign of the emperor Julian, Ammianus' pagan hero, and his successors down to 378.[3]

The lopsided chronological structure of the *Histories* does not mean that the early books are unimportant. The treatment of biblical and early ecclesiastical history is critical for establishing a perspective on the spiritual meaning of human history and is hardly irrelevant to understanding Gregory's handling of the petty events of his episcopacy, which, it is fair to say I think, he regarded as coupled to the verities of history as he understood it. And the lengthy Book 2 stands out for its extensive treatment of Clovis' career, a subject, encompassing over a third of the book, obviously important to Gregory's conception of his own day, but also one about which he was imperfectly informed. This book has often consumed the interest of historians and general readers alike, at the expense of the later, thicker, descriptions of contemporary affairs.

Another feature of the contemporary emphases of Books 5–10 needs to be stressed. Gregory's treatment of chronology in the early books is often vague, and sometimes seems inaccurate.[4] But in Books 5–10 it becomes exacting, for these books are arranged in the form of annals, with each year (none are omitted) introduced by the regnal date of the Austrasian king Childebert II, starting in December 575.[5] Although this does not stop Gregory when he wants to from casting his eye back and forward chronologically, sometimes by many years,[6] the regnal years of Childebert become the format for the recording of events, even to the extent of postponing the completion of an ongoing event until the chronologically appropriate point.[7] Even within years, Gregory tended to lay

3   For the present, disputed *status questionis* on Ammianus' perspective, see T.D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality*, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 56 (Ithaca/London, 1998) and John Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Baltimore, 1989). Cf. Murray, "Chronology," 157–159. And on the last book cf. Michael Kulikowski, "Coded Polemic in Ammiannus Book 31 and the Date and Place of its Composition," *Journal of Roman Studies* 102 (2012), 79–102.

4   However the jury is out on the chronology of Clovis' career. The best introduction to the Clovis problem is Marc Spencer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis," *Early Medieval Europe* 3/2 (1994), 97–116. There are also problems in the post-Clovis period down to the early years of Gregory's own lifetime. For the literature on Quintianus, his expulsion from Rodez, and the harrying of the Auvergne, see James, *VP* 6, nn. 4, 9.

5   For practical purposes I treat this, and succeeding years, as beginning January 1st of the following year. Childebert's first year is thus A.D. 576. As far as I can tell this convenience does not materially distort Gregory's chronology. See Table 3.2.

6   See below regarding Mummolus, Rauching, Sagittarius, and Hermenegild.

7   The Sichar/Chramnesind feud (*Hist.* 7.47 a. 585 and 9.19 a. 587), allowed to play itself out in two entries divided by two years, is hardly the only example. On which, see Walter Goffart, *Narrators*, 125, n. 56 (as in n. 16) and Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, as at n. 16, 60, n. 45.

TABLE 3.1   *Books and chapters keyed to the regnal years of Childebert II* *

Bk 5	5.1–14(a)	576	I
	5.14(b)–24	577	II
	5.25–26	578	III
	5.27–32	579	IV
	5.33–50	580	V
Bk 6	6.1–13	581	VI
	6.14–24	582	VII
	6.25–32	583	VIII
	6.33–46	584	IX
Bk 7	7.1–23		
	7.24–47	585	X
Bk 8	8.1–37		
	8.38–42	586	XI
	8.43–46	587	XII
Bk 9	9.1–19		
	9.20–25	588	XIII
	9.26–44	589	XIV
Bk 10	10.1–23	590	XV
	10.24–31	591	XVI

* For the sake of convenience, the year in Arabic numerals corresponds to the Roman calendar year beginning in January. Childebert's first year actually began at Christmas 575 but is listed above as 576. Roman numerals correspond to the year numbers of Childebert's reign as given by Gregory.

out events chronologically, though he was perfectly capable of transgressing this limitation for narrative purposes, when he wanted to.

This annalistic structure has not always been fully appreciated, even by specialists.[8] It is not specially marked out in the text (though it is obvious enough when reading its political narrative continuously). Readers, professional or merely interested, who in particular dip into the *Histories* for references, can

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8   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 43 n. 11, and 51 n. 31, as at n. 16, grudgingly acknowledged that from Book 5 onward Gregory dated events "almost annalistically." For the passages causing him unnecessary doubts, see next note. And see, p. 116, where unwarranted suspicion is cast on the precision of Gregory's dating and sequencing (all the events can be placed fairly accurately in reasonable sequence in late 584 and early 585). But cf. below, 9.2 n. 9.

easily miss its significance (and even presence) for ordering the material, creating an artificial puzzlement about the dating of events. The annalistic structure is of course not compromised by the occasional mention of the regnal years of other kings: Guntram and Chilperic had regnal dates different from that of Childebert, and occasionally Gregory, having introduced the year according to Childebert's regnal year, will note an event's chronological equivalence according to regnal years of his uncles, which had a different configuration than his.[9] But there is no escaping the framework of Childebert's reign for the ordering of events after 575.[10]

Such an emphasis on recent events fits neatly with Gregory's characterization of his work with the unmodified term *Histories*.[11] This is the title that Gregory gave at the end of the work when he summed up his literary output (*Hist*. 10.31). It may give pause to readers of English (and French) translations of the work who are habituated to the late Carolingian title for it, *History of the Franks*. But that is not the title Gregory gave it and the *Histories* are not a national history of the Franks or anyone else, though in the century following his death they gradually and increasingly were turned to that purpose by abbreviators and excerptors. Their appeal in modern time to general readers and scholars alike has often rested on the same false understanding of their contents.[12]

One final observation of modest significance needs to be made. One can argue about when history became 'contemporary' for Gregory or what he saw as recent versus ancient times, but the above discussion of the *Histories*' structure suggests a rather simple way of viewing the historical content of the books

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9   For Childebert's 3rd, 4th, 7th, and 16th year. There is really no pattern to these ancillary references because not all the events immediately following the establishment of the year involve the older kings, though some do. There are also a couple of references to the regnal dates of Guntram in later books. *Hist*. 7.1 dates Guntram's trip to Paris via Orleans, where his stay there is described in some detail, to the 24th year of the Burgundian king, but the event, which took place in the middle of 585, is still placed resolutely in the sequence of Childebert's years. The number of Guntram's regnal year is mentioned in passing in *Hist*. 10.10 where the subject is a judicial duel fought in the Vosges before the Burgundian king (the year for the purposes of the *Histories*' structure is defined earlier in 10.1 with just Childebert's number).

10   Table 3.1 lays out the chapters of Books 5–10, according to the years of Childebert.

11   See Walter Goffart, "From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum* and Back Again: Aspects of the Textual History of Gregory of Tours," in *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan,* T.F.X. Noble, J.J. Contreni (eds.) (Kalamazoo, 1989), 55–76; reprinted in Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After* (London and Ronceverte, 1989), 255–274. And see below, Reimitz, ch. 15.

12   See previous note, and Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History,* as at n. 16.

as a whole: Books 1–4, coming down to the second year of Gregory's episcopate, were intended as a kind of introduction to the annals of Books 5–10 covering a period when Tours was under, first Chilperic (a. 576–584), then briefly Guntram (a. 585), and then Childebert II. This period corresponds to the second year of Gregory's episcopate down to the year 591, with an epilogue written in 594, the year of Gregory's death.

3.2 Introduction

One of the purposes of the present study is to say a few relatively simple things about Gregory's political views, his loyalties, and his opinions of contemporary political figures as they are reflected in his *Histories*. I offer these as the basis for future, deeper thinking about the political dimension of his work and indeed of his age. A simple task like this might seem odd or unnecessary at so late a date in Gregorian studies. Should we not have the basics down by now? Should not some close reading by ordinary intelligent readers be sufficient to establish the main political lines of his depiction of events? Attention to the current literature of the subject reveals, however, that there is hardly agreement at all regarding even elementary conclusions about Gregory's attitudes to contemporary politics.

The reason is not just the complexity of Gregory's narrative or his sometimes oblique method of commenting on events. There is another reason – which brings me to a second purpose: namely, to clear away a stumbling block that has bedevilled Gregorian studies throughout the modern phase of its history and continues to confound our understanding of Gregory's relationship to the politics of his day. The identification and removal of the stumbling block points the way to the simple but important conclusions about Gregory's political perspective to which I just alluded.

What is the stumbling block? Since at least the nineteenth century scholars have claimed they can detect graduated phases in the composition of the *Histories*. In particular, the narrative from Book 5 onward – that is, roughly at the point when Gregory's account deals with events contemporary to his episcopacy – is commonly said to keep pace with the events being described, or to present a running account of their occurrence and to constitute a veritable diary of contemporary affairs. In short, the account is supposed to be narrowly synchronic with the events it describes, as if Gregory's text existed in some sense in real time. The critical books here for the theory are Books 5 and 6 which cover the events of 576–584 during the time Tours was under the rule of the Neustrian king Chilperic. This assumption of synchronicity, not just a

vague contemporaneity, is what could be called the chronicle fallacy – the demonstrably false supposition that works of this form must be dishing out items 'hot off the press' as it were, just as they were happening.[13]

3.3   Traditional Depictions of the *Histories* and its Author: The Naive Compiler and Diarist

The theory of synchronic or graduated composition until quite recent times existed within a wider framework of views about Gregory as an historian that we can consider the traditional approach to interpreting the *Histories*.

The size of the *Histories* and what I just referred to as its complexity have commonly been taken by modern commentators as a confused medley of secular, ecclesiastical, and topical events. Gregory's deployment of discrete narrative fragments was found by moderns difficult to weave into conventional patterns of historical exposition. These narrative fragments – constituting Gregory's famous 'episodic style' – were acknowledged to be attractive in their particularities but at an interpretative level were thought best understood as the product of the author's ad hoc piling up of events as they happened and a failure on his part to grasp the requirements of sophisticated and meaningful historical narrative. By this measure Gregory was a naïve and superstitious compiler of raw data, which he conveyed to his readers in disjointed narrative fragments that belied any deliberate reflective and selective perspective. In documenting the misbehaviour of his contemporaries, Gregory could be read in effect as a conduit that perfectly reflected unconsciously the chaotic barbarism that was supposed to characterize his age.[14]

The way the manuscript tradition was commonly, though not universally, understood seemed to many to show the piecemeal composition of the *Histories*. The Merovingian B class of manuscripts containing a six-book version (Books 1–6), ending with the death of king Chilperic in 584, was regarded as documenting an early first edition.[15] This was thought of as being completed at the time of the king's death and published long before Gregory wrapped up

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13   See below, n. 36. "Hot off the fire" is Erich Auerbach's phrase, in *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton 1965), 109, quoting himself with satisfaction from *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton 1953), 90.

14   The classic statement of the last point is M.J.J. Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France avant le douzième siècle* (Paris, 1839) 2: 275–314. From a pedagogical perspective, one might regard this as the 'how *not* to book' in approaching Gregory.

15   On text classes of the *Histories*, see below, 5.1 and 15.

the ten-book version at the end of his life. The Chilperic books (5–6), therefore, must have been written close to, if not contemporaneously with, the events as they happened. And since the ten-book version of the *Histories* contained chapters (often of a local and ecclesiastical nature) that were not found in the B class of MSS, these chapters, it was supposed, must have been added in a second edition. English language readers of Thorpe will still see these passages marked out with asterisks as addenda to an original edition; readers of Dalton will confront a dual numbering system that is supposed to alert them to the putative additions.

Were all these characterizations to truly capture the nature of the *Histories* and its author, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that Gregory had worked as a kind of diarist, reacting to events as they occurred, with no significant subsequent reworking of the original perspective.

But present-day Gregorian scholarship has with good reason jettisoned such a characterization of the *Histories* and its author as just outlined. The work of Walter Goffart and Martin Heinzelmann in complementary but sometimes contrasting ways has rejected the chronicle fallacy about the *Histories*, showing instead that the fragmented character of the narrative should be seen as involving integral elements of a unified moral or theological vision that sets the vain strivings of the reprobate against the ethical and ecclesiological norms of the elect and the church of Christ.[16] The episodic quality of Gregory's writing is not a product of disorderly compilation but can now be more readily understood as a consequence of conscious structuring on the part of an historian, not the ad hoc recording of ephemera by a diarist. And once Gregory's reasons for particularizing and laying out the narrative are appreciated, his tracing of political events hardly looks disconnected; the narrative is anything but unplanned or undirected.[17] As for the two-version theory of the *Histories* (an earlier six-book edition to the death of Chilperic and a final ten-book

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16   Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (*A.D. 550–800*)*: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), ch. 3, 112–234; paperback edition, with a new retrospective Preface, xx–xxvi (Notre Dame, 2005); and Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, Christopher Carroll trans. (Cambridge, 2001); original German edition, *Gregor von Tours (538–594):"Zehn Bücher Geschichte," Historiographie und Gesellschaftskonzept im 6. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1994). Giselle de Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower: Studies of Imagination in the Works of Gregory of Tours* (Amsterdam, 1987), 1–26, provides a valuable survey of scholarly efforts to grasp the character of Gregory's style.

17   Alexander Callander Murray trans., *Gregory of Tours: The Merovingians*, Readings in Medieval Civilization and Cultures 10 (Peterborough, 2006), lays out the political narrative elements consecutively, with a guide in the Introduction to its interconnected political components.

redaction with various additions to the six-book version), this supposition has long been recognized – and well before the standard English translations were made – as resting on a misreading of the contents and manuscript tradition.[18] Gregory never published a six-book version; the six-book *Histories* of the B manuscripts is a post-Gregorian abridgement of the ten-book work that Gregory left to posterity at his death in 594.[19] The *Histories*, measured by this revised understanding of its main features, might seem to have the look of a unified work.

What this new picture implies should be clear. Gregory was not some kind of diarist-chronicler and inadvertent interpreter of his age; he was a real historian, and like any number of the fraternity of great practitioners of that discipline, one who consciously shaped the world around him and purveyed particular views of the human condition and the impersonal forces operating within it. Well, this would seem to be the implication, but, strange to say, these new views still coexist with the tendency to read Gregory through the old notion that he was a synchronic recorder of the events of his episcopacy and that his history was composed in graduated steps that are detectable in the text. Indeed in recent literature this idea has been rather twisted into a series of inconsistent formulas for plumbing the depths of the bishop's psychology.

3.4 An Unhappy Synthesis: Gregory the Diarist and Gregory the Political Actor

The synchronic interpretation of the *Histories*' composition fitted easily enough with old views of Gregory as a naive compiler, heaping up observations of events round about him in chaotic fragmented narrative chunks. But it was of little practical consequence as long as scholarly interests largely saw the *Histories* as a mine to be quarried for modern reconstructions. The last generation of scholars, however, has largely shed the old understanding of Gregory as a simplistic diarist and he is now readily seen as an author structuring and shaping his narrative.[20] This new understanding has had another consequence

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18   Fundamental for the background is Goffart, "*Historiae* to *Historia Francorum*," as at n. 11.

19   See Goffart, *Narrators*, 112–234; Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*, 192–201; John Contreni, "Reading Gregory of Tours in the Middle Ages," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden, 2002), 419–434, and below, 15.1.

20   The tendency in English-language scholarship to be hostile to Heinzelmann's and to privilege Goffart's view, seems, in my opinion, to be accompanied by misreadings of both of them.

as well. It has moved Gregory himself into the centre of interpreting his *Histories*, making him the key for understanding the people and events he portrays. This trend, I think, explains why a number of influential scholars, happy to align themselves with an interpretation that recognizes the creative agency of Gregory, have nevertheless been reluctant to abandon the theory of synchronic composition. Indeed they have wholeheartedly taken it up (it is never argued) and elevated it into a methodological tool for investigating the bishop of Tours himself and the supposed developments in his perspective and personality.

It is not as if they have not been warned against doing this. The two current leading exponents of a unified vision in Gregory's work have explicitly shunned reliance on chronological schemes to interpret the *Histories*. According to Walter Goffart, who did not summarily discount some form of graduated composition, "The work is homogeneous enough to discourage a sustained concern with [Gregory's] chronology of composition. We are well advised to concentrate on the finished ten books [of *Histories*], alongside the *Miracula*, just as the author left them at the end of his life."[21] Martin Heinzelmann, again open to an early composition of Books 1–4, and an initial composition contemporaneous for the Chilperic years, still thought Books 5–10 were completed in a final form of redaction and revision: "Gregory's Histories," he says, "should therefore be seen and understood as a single, homogeneous work. After all, this was what the author intended."[22]

If this is not good enough to ward off narrow synchronic interpretations, one can note that long ago even Gabriel Monod, one of the architects of graduated composition, and apparently now held up as the authority for Gregory's writing in real time, wrote the following: "It is impossible in fact to determine precisely the period when [Gregory's history] was written. Gregory worked on it his entire life and reshaped it repeatedly."[23] Monod, who even accepted the priority of a putative six-book version ending in 584, believed Gregory wrote

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21   *Narrators*, 124–125: "The work was neither composed all in one piece nor systematically set down *pari passu* with the events even in the most contemporary books." Goffart is open to the possibility of an early composition of Books 1–4 before 580 but hardly endorses the idea (153). The preface to the paperback edition (see at n. 16) is even more resolved in rejecting the utility of chronological schemes.

22   "Une oeuvre composée pendant toute sa vie d'éveque": M. Heinzelmann, "Structures typologique de l'histoire d'après les Histoires de Grégoire de Tours: Prophéties – accomplissement – renouvellement," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 92.4 (2004), 569; idem, *Gregory of Tours*, 114–115.

23   Gabriel Monod, *Études critiques sur les sources de l'histoire mérovingienne, 1e partie* (Paris, 1872), 45. Cf. Heinzelmann in n. 22. And on the rocky road of recent attempts to find just the right authority for synchronism, see Murray, "Chronology," n. 14.

his work in chronological stages closely connected with the events of his life, but he didn't think that was much of a key to interpreting his work. I would say a work "reshaped" throughout a lifetime, could hardly be interpreted as a graduated, much less a synchronic composition at all – just one that took a long time to complete.

The current reliance on the theory of synchronic composition steadfastly refuses to confront its limitations. Monod is cited as if his reservation about the utility of the theory was an irrelevant afterthought. What is even more surprising, the traditional theory of graduated and synchronic composition is accepted not as a general statement about a process of writing *and* revision but as an unproblematic, indeed precise, relationship between text as we have it and event: it has become in the hands of current advocates of it a methodology for establishing a close to absolute synchronic relationship between an event and its recording in Gregory's history.

Synchronic methodology can produce on particular points disturbingly disparate interpretations, but it also leads to regularities in approach. The common effect that synchronicity produces is – if I may use the word – the disarticulation of Gregory's views. All statements of the bishop are potentially uncoupled one from the other, rooted only in the particular context of the event, without connections to other texts or other parts of the narrative. Disarticulation in itself rarely produces much meaning and so an interpretative *deus ex machina* is employed by practitioners of the method, who are indeed looking for meaning beyond the immediate context of the text. Disarticulation also provides the basis for intellectual biographies of Gregory over the course of his episcopacy, and the detection of turning points in his development as an historian.

I mention three recent examples.[24] Adriaan Breukelaar produces an intellectual biography that is largely psychological.[25] Gregory begins for Breukelaar as a naïve archivist piling up a record of the events of his time, until the appearance of the pseudo-prophet Desiderius in 587 – his turn in the *Histories* is limited to one chapter in Book 9 (*Hist*. 9.6). Desiderius is Breukelaar's *deus ex machina*. Despite Gregory running Desiderius out of town, the bishop was now forced, according to Breukelaar, to contemplate the spiritual and apocalyptic implications of his narrative. Passages betraying what are deemed to be mature

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24   A more circumstantial account of these, with examples from their works, can be found in Murray, "Chronology," 186–194.

25   Adriaan H.B. Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul: The Histories of Gregory of Tours Interpreted in their Historical Context*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 57 (Göttingen, 1994).

or reflective religious thinking are, by this reading, to be viewed as the product of a late reshaping and distinguished from the ad hoc reports of the political diarist. Judgements about individuals that are not simple and homogeneous are attributed to different times of writing – and contradictory evaluations of character – even if they are tightly grouped in Gregory's narrative.[26]

Breukelaar's biography is hardly a result of anything that Gregory tells us but of the trends of historiography. It is an amalgamation of the old and new Gregory – the primitive political reporter *and* the thoughtful theologian. It documents not Gregory's intellectual development but the currents of modern historiography, of which it is an imagined reflection.

Ian Wood and Guy Halsall provide a very different psychological portrait.[27] This has movement too of a kind – in the events swirling around the bishop of Tours and his changing response to them. It imagines, however, a continuous psychological anchor of sorts in the depiction of the bishop as a fearful political trimmer. The *deus ex machina* that gives meaning to synchronicity here is the constant fear that Gregory has of those in power.

In this portrayal the bishop is a devious reporter and political player, carefully navigating the treacheries of Merovingian politics, hedging his bets until one party comes out on top, and then, when necessary, covering his tracks – all the time casting his narrative to correspond to the requirements of the immediate political context, and fearful he is about to be exposed. Invocation of fear and synchronicity are also Wood's justification for claiming he can recognize a coded subtext that inverts standard readings. For instance, by this method, a treasonous outburst by Sagittarius of Gap, one of the truly unregenerate villains of the narrative and a stain on the episcopate, can be made to represent the views of Gregory himself, though Gregory introduces his utterance by calling the bishop of Gap a "flighty, vacuous, senseless, babbler."[28]

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26   Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 48; on Cato († 571), see *Hist*. 4. 5–7, 11, 15, 31, the last viewed as showing Gregory retracting his previous negative judgments of Cato on the latter's death.

27   Ian Wood, "The Secret Histories of Gregory of Tours," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 71 (1993), 253 – 270 – a work with a revealing, if unexplained, title; idem, *Gregory of Tours* (Bangor, 1994). Guy Halsall, "Nero and Herod? The Death of Chilperic and Gregory's Writing of History," in *World of Gregory of* Tours, (eds.) Mitchell and Wood, 337–350; and idem, "The Preface to Book V of Gregory of Tours' Histories: Its Form, Context and Significance," *English Historical Review* 122/496 (2007), 297–317.

28   *Hist*. 5.20. This is part of an attempt to show that *Hist*. 5. 17, 20 (both a. 577) and 35 (a. 580) are synchronous with the events – and hinge in some way on the real-time death of Guntram's queen Austrechild. The chronological scope of *Hist*. 5.20 extends well beyond 577; see Murray, "Chronology," 191 n. 106, and below at n. 60.

While Gregory's judgments are allegedly conditioned by fear, Wood and Halsall cannot actually agree on the source of the fear in particular instances. I will refer here only to their quite contradictory interpretations of Gregory's obituary of Chilperic. Wood sees its harshness as a mark of Gregory's immediate relief at the king's passing. Halsall, following Wood's method, merely finds it "ironic" and driven by the new fear of Guntram.

Like Breukelaar, Wood and Halsall also detect psychological turning points. To Wood the key one occurs in 580 when Gregory was tried for treason before Chilperic and realized that from now on he would have to watch his every word.[29] To Halsall, Gregory merely dramatized the trial. Gregory's fear really started in 585 when Guntram became the dominant king and Gregory needed to cover his tracks, especially the allegedly cozy relationship he had with Chilperic.[30]

The method of synchronicity plus fear produces the following results: Gregory can mean what he says, he can mean the opposite. Statements by figures in the history can be truer to what Gregory believed than what the bishop dared say, or the contrary. What is said in one place is no guide to what is said in another, or the contrary, because Gregory's political circumstances may have shifted between one statement and another.

Let me note, scepticism about Gregory's candour is nothing new nor in itself unwarranted. Siegmund Hellmann expressed some of the main worthwhile points of these political portraits over a hundred years ago and in a more plausible fashion, casting them as an expression of literary strategy, habits of mind, and personality, not shifting chronological circumstance and abject terror.[31]

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29   Wood's imaginative and contradictory reflections on whether Gregory's *Histories* were discovered by the king at this time have apparently insinuated themselves into the literature: Max Diesenberger, "Hair, Sacrality and Symbolic Capital in the Frankish Kingdoms," in *Construction of Communities*, (eds.) Richard Corradini et al. (Leiden, 2003), 198, introduces the subject in his exposition to no particular purpose.

30   On the actual chronology of Guntram's very limited association with Tours, see below at p. 92–93. Failure to grasp the chronology leads astray Rob Meens, "The Sanctity of the Basilica of St Martin: Gregory of Tours and the Practice of Sanctuary in the Merovingian Period," in *Texts and Identities in the the Early Middle Ages*, (eds.) Richard Corradini et al. (Vienna, 2006), 286. And see below Appendix, p. 100.

31   Siegmund Hellmann, "Studien zur mittelalterlichen Geschichtschreibung I: Gregor von Tours," *Historische Zeitschrift* 107 (1911), 57–99, rpt in idem, *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen zur Historiographie und Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters*, (ed.) Helmut Beumann (Weimar, 1961), 1–43.

The depiction of Gregory as an apprehensive, expedient politician is really a variant on the old idea that the bishop of Tours was essentially a diarist. But instead of the bishop naïvely recording events as they occurred, the new view now portrays him as nervously looking over his shoulder, fearful that the wrong people might get a look at his thoughts and tailoring his narrative to the momentary political situation.

3.5   The Case for Synchronic Composition

Is there a way out of this rabbit hole of inversion and dislocation? We could begin by taking Monod's warning seriously. But we can go much further than that by asking if there is any substance to the theory of synchronic and graduated composition at all. It is alluded to in the literature in a piecemeal fashion but until recently has never been examined comprehensively.[32]

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the foundation for graduated and synchronic composition, its *sine qua non*, is the false notion of a six-book *Histories* existing before a ten-book version. Without this misreading of the manuscript tradition establishing the basic grounds for synchronicity in some broad sense, it is hard to comprehend why various textual indicators have been thought to confirm the idea. I have dealt with these at some length elsewhere but the following summary captures the main issues.[33]

One might begin most basically with the structure of the *Histories* itself, which incredibly enough is just assumed to correspond to the sequence of composition and from Book 5 onwards to be in step and in close conjunction with the events. A typical division in the literature, with the usual dates of composition for the divisions, would run something like this:

Hist. 1–4	Composed first, around 576, and covering the period from Creation to 575 and the death of Sigibert of Austrasia, ending with a computation of the years, a sign, we are assured, of a compositional unit drawn up shortly thereafter. The events of *Hist.* 4.47–51, which included the struggle for Tours between Chilperic and Sigibert, are thus often seen as a unit written between 573–575, and completed in 576.
Hist. 5–6	Written next and continuously, covering the period Chilperic ruled over Tours (a. 576–584). Completed in 584 with Chilperic's

death. Despite Chilperic's rule, the years are dated according to the reign of Childebert II, Sigibert's son. Book 5 and its prologue (the last one in the *Histories*) are often dated to 580, when Gregory supposedly looked back on events up to that point.

Hist. 7–10   Last stage of composition, but still a continuation of the yearly dating begun in Book 5, and largely synchronous in its writing. Gregory is often thought to have paused for a while after completing Books 1–6 (a notion pretty much demanded by the two version theory), but Book 7, it is claimed, is still somehow synchronous.[34] These books cover the period when first Guntram and then Childebert had control of Tours.

It seems too obvious to point out that the compositional elements of an historical work need not be joined to the events it recounts in a simplistic one-to-one relationship of sequence and strict contemporaneity.[35] Even chronicles, despite their raw appearance, are in fact rarely impulsive responses to immediate circumstance just as it happened.[36] Simple sequential structure of a work on its own tells us very little about its composition and dating.

Then there are dubious and ambiguous interpretations of Latin temporal modifiers, taken to be references to the time of writing as opposed to the time of the events. Most of these (*hoc anno*, for example following the establishment of a regnal year) have long since been abandoned and are rendered in the translation process as references to the year in question, not the time of writing! One such usage still persists, however, as a proof text – the use of *praesenti anno* in *Hist*. 7.23 s.a. 584, taken to be a clear indication of synchronicity of event and composition in Book 7.[37] But *praesens* is relative like other temporal modifiers and indeed in *Hist*. 10.13 Gregory uses it in a passage about the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It is possible to detect a pattern in its use in 7.23 and its three other appearances in the table of contents to the books of the *Histories* (*Hist*. 7.45; 9.44; 10.30). Each usage comes at the end of the chronological sequence of the year's events and appears to be a marker for events (such as

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34   On the supposed 'pause' after Book 6, see Murray, "Chronology," 163–164, n. 18.

35   Murray, "Chronology," 165, and see Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 29.

36   Thorpe's introduction captures common simplistic views on the supposed contemporaneous and diary-like quality of the chronicle as a genre. For the corrective see Steven Muhlberger, *The Fifth-Century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452* (Liverpool, 1990).

37   Murray, "Chronology," 168.

the weather, or in 7.23, a protracted criminal case) that Gregory did not want to fit precisely into the sequence of the year's events. *Praesenti anno* in these contexts does seem to signal the course of a year already established, but usage here is hardly rigorous; *hoc anno*, repeated and unmodified, can be used to indicate exactly the same idea. Indeed some translators simply render both phrases as 'in this year.'[38]

The urge to document graduated or synchronic composition has also led to strange and faulty resolutions of relatively straightforward grammatical points. Thus readers of Thorpe may be led to believe that Gregory himself mentions in the explicit of Book 5 that he finished writing it in 580 ("Here ends Book 5, which I finished in the fifth year of King [Childebert]").[39] But this is a misreading of a past participle in a colophon that merely notes that the contents of the book came to end in that year. Among translators Thorpe is unique in his rendering, though he didn't invent it.[40]

Then there is the tortured resolution of a future tense (*faciet*) in *Hist.* 5.19, found in two B manuscripts. The passage refers to God being bountiful to the Emperor Tiberius.[41] English readers of Dalton and Thorpe, who both used the Corbie manuscript as edited by Henri Omont, have been spared this aberration because it provides an unproblematic perfect (*fecit*), placing the text in the past tense.[42] Max Bonnet spotted this instance of the future tense a long time ago and assumed it meant that Tiberius (†582, s.a. 583 in *Hist.* 6.30) was still alive when Gregory wrote. German readers will find this future in Buchner's translation, but are denied a sense of the tense sequences of the passage.[43] Gregory had the still common bad habit of using the historical present tense for vividness – even in distant history. These historical presents in Gregory's writing are connected to an original perfect establishing the placement of the

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38   Such references of course have previously been defined by an *anno Childeberti* followed by the particular year.

39   "Explicit liber quintus finitus in anno quinto Childeberti regis."

40   The author of the error, and others like it, seems to be Gustavo Vinay, *San Gregorio di Tours* (Turin, 1940), 58–63, who is still cited as an authority on dating the *Histories'* composition. Thorpe, as all translators do, must have momentarily nodded at this point because the error is one of two in the explicit – at least in the early printing I possess (the king mentioned is Chilperic). The error makes its way into Guy Halsall, "Nero and Herod? The Death of Chilperic and Gregory's Writing of History" in *World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Mitchell and Wood, 339 n. 12.

41   "[N]ec ei [=Tiberius] Dominus aliquid defecere faciet pro bona voluntate sua."

42   Henri Omont, *Histoire des Francs* (Paris, 1886).

43   Rudolf Buchner and Wilhelm Giesebrecht, *Zehn Bücher Geschichten* (Darmstadt, 1955), 1: 323–324.

events in the past. The passage on Tiberius, Gregory's foil for Chilperic, is full of historical presents. Translators tend to smooth all these tense switches, inelegant to modern readers, into the past tense. In the case of *Hist.* 5.19 the future is dependent on an historical present, whose temporal placement has already been determined by a perfect. The future in *Hist.* 5.19 is simply a future in the past, a feature completely lost in Buchner's translation where the historical presents are resolved into past tenses and only the future tense is left to stand out rather oddly. One does not need to be a Latinist to see there is a problem in this treatment. These uses of tense sequences (past-historical present-future) can be understood readily in modern patterns of speech and have nothing to do with a future beyond the ken of the speaker.[44]

The confounding of Gregory's tenses in *Hist.* 5.19 is really just another example of an obstinate resolution of temporal indicators in Gregory's language in favour of synchronic composition. The use of the past tense for Tiberius in the passage (the base tense for the passage), by the way, is a sign that the emperor was dead by the time Gregory composed the passage (see further below).

And finally there remains textual references, claimed to be datable allusions. Surely Gregory somewhere makes a statement about events that can be dated unambiguously to the same time in which he was writing, or roughly soon thereafter, and specifically to the time of Chilperic? Apparently not, though two passages are optimistically claimed to show this. They are hardly unambiguous about synchronicity or any kind of graduated composition, and indeed tend to demonstrate its opposite.

Both are in Book 5. To take them in the sequence of their placement in Gregory's text:

1. Prologue to Book 5. Basic assumptions about the prologue (and Book 5 itself) are as follows. The prologue is often thought to have been written prior to Chilperic's death in 584 (*Hist.* 6.46), because, as Monod said, it "addresses the kings whose quarrels then were tearing Gaul apart."[45] The year 580 is commonly suggested as a more precise date, on the assumption that Gregory penned the prologue when he completed Book 5, after completing his account of the first years Chilperic held Tours (a. 576–580).[46]

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44   A literal translation, rendering the various tenses as written, is given by Murray, "Chronology," 172–173, with suggestions of some common modern speech analogies.

45   Monod, *Études*, 46; and cf. Buchner, *Zehn Bücher* 1: xxi.

46   In an attempt to establish this as the point at which Gregory began the *Histories,* Halsall, dates the prologue to Easter 576 in the form of a sermon preached before the young king Merovech, Chilperic's son. To make the references contemporary he must assume Gregory

The prologue is a lament on the dangers of civil war but nothing in it is datable in a useful sense and the kings addressed are not named. A single king, again not named, is addressed at the end and urged to fight the spiritual war in himself against sin, thereby drawing a comparison between the wrongful wars of Merovingian politics and the righteous internal battle of the devout Christian. Its contents fit as well the continuing conflicts of Childebert's reign after he took back Tours as it does the years 576–584. Without the false supposition of a first edition of the *Histories* ending with Book 6 in 584, it is hard to see why it should only be referring to these years. Civil war was not new and quarrels real and potential remained endemic throughout Gregory's episcopate and beyond. Gregory did not need to be prescient to know that conflict among Merovingians was built into the prevailing system of partible inheritance and dynastic rivalry.[47]

Structurally as well the prologue of Book 5 serves all the remaining books. Gregory's work contains a general preface, and then four prologues: the first for Book 1; the second for Book 2; the third for Books 3 and 4; and finally the fourth, the prologue to Book 5, the book that begins the set of annals dated by the regnal years of Childebert II of Austrasia, and continuing down to Book 10 in 591.

By the way, the prologue, as a preliminary to Books 5–10, belies the common assumption that the audience for the *Histories* must have been strictly clerical. The address to kings shows that Gregory hoped his books might function in the fashion of that rather indefinite genre known as 'mirrors of princes.' We can only guess who Gregory thought these kings might be (the sons of Childebert?) because his work was not published in his lifetime.[48]

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was aware of Merovech's intentions to go against his father, which in fact were not revealed until after the prince left Tours for Rouen ("Preface," 310).

47 The comment by Buchner (*Zehn Bücher* 1: xxi) that "Chilperic's death established a reasonable internal peace in the Frankish kingdom for the rest of Gregory's life," is unworthy of his scholarship. It has been repeated without attention to the events it glosses over (e.g. De Nie, *Many Windowed Tower*, 57). The stability Buchner imagines was in fact only established in 613 after numerous campaigns among the interested parties and the elimination of the Austrasian line. For a partial recitation of events, see Murray, "Chronology," 165–167. On partible inheritance, see below, Appendix.

48 The not uncommon view that the kings are entirely fictional is quite plausible, though I accept that Gregory thought they would be members of the Austrasian house. Alas, the house of Chlothar II prevailed, and Gregory's work suffered an abridgement consisting of the first 6 books, that fitted better the political conditions of the 7th century.

2. Hist. *5.14, s.a. 580: Gregory's dream of the death of Chilperic and his sons.* Their demise is announced in a dream by an angel flying through the air exclaiming, "God has struck down Chilperic and his sons. No issue of his loins has survived to rule his kingdom down through the ages." Gregory then comments: "Chilperic at that time had four sons by different wives, not to speak of daughters," and notes that the dream was later fulfilled. The dream and its context deserves a more extended treatment, but I will limit the present analysis to its significance for dating. The common claim is that Gregory could not have written this prophecy before Chilperic was bereft of sons in 580 and scarcely after 582 when new sons were born; thereafter Chilperic was without a successor only briefly in 584; from 584 Chilperic's son Chlothar II took up his kingdom. Thus there was only a small window between 580 and 582 when this prophecy could have been written and made sense.

Attentive readers may have already detected problems with this interpretation. Gregory had until 594 to fiddle with this prophecy if he had felt uncomfortable with its truthfulness.[49] Placing the time of writing around 580 is also dependent on only half the prophecy. Summaries of the prophecy in the literature regularly only mention the second part, the *mors filiorum Chilperici* – the death of the king's sons. But the angel also predicts the death of Chilperic himself and Gregory assures us both parts of the dream have been fulfilled. Chilperic was killed late in 584, suggesting of course composition after that date. As to the notion that continuation of Chilperic's line in the child Chlothar II precluded the passage being written after his birth and succession, this is contradicted by long-standing observations about Gregory's representation of Chlothar II's reign. Since Hellmann pointed it out over a century ago, scholars have been well aware of the seed of doubt about Chilperic's paternity and Fredegund's fidelity sown by Gregory in the second half of the *Histories*: charges of adultery against the queen in 580 – Gregory's defence of his own role in the scandal is hardly a ringing endorsement of the queen: "I denied in truth having uttered these things, saying I heard others say them, but I had not devised them" (*Hist.* 5.47, 49); Guntram's public suspicion about Chlothar's paternity and demand for proof of Fredegund's probity, satisfied only by the

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49   I am avoiding the question of whether the dream really happened as described or not and simply treating it in a text-critical fashion. To accept Gregory's account as a report on an oneiric event that occurred at the time simply dissolves its relevance to the dating of actual events. Gregory's insistence that it had been fulfilled by his writing however does seem to ground it to events – unless Gregory thought the extirpation of Chilperic's line would surely occur at a future time when readers would plainly see the veracity of the angel's prophecy.

oaths of three bishops and 300 magnates (*Hist.* 8.9); ambiguous comments about the relationship of Fredegund and the chamberlain Eberulf (*Hist.* 7.21); and Gregory's own designation of Chlothar as "the alleged son of Chilperic" (*Hist.* 8.31).[50] Doubts about Chilperic's paternity, of course, benefitted the Austrasian court, and were no doubt propagated by it; readers sympathetic to the house of Childebert might be expected to agree that the prophecy was fulfilled in both its aspects with the death of Chilperic in late 584.[51] As Merovingian history shows, the cultivation of such doubts could be preparatory to the removal of a king. The prophecy is hardly the basis of an argument for composition under Chilperic, but rather supposes a *post quem* date following his death.

Such are the usages of the *Histories* and the passages that have been thought to confirm synchronic composition beginning deep in the reign of Chilperic over Tours. Breukelaar has noted sanguinely that datable allusions to synchronicity are "hardly overwhelming."[52] On examination they prove to be a lot less than that. The negative findings presented above are in the end less important than positive evidence for the time of writing, which will be presented next.

3.6   The Case against Synchronic Composition

The text provides numerous signs that it was composed, not continuously from the time of Chilperic's control over Tours after 576, but after 585 when, in Gregory's view, the rightful Austrasian king, Childebert II, took control of the city. Some of this evidence is structural, some of it datable elements producing reasonably late *post quem* dates. Some evidence only establishes good probabilities of composition under Childebert II but other evidence establishes *post quem* dates with certainty. I give a partial list. Some of this evidence has been noted before in my previous treatment of it, but in the past it has invariably been interpreted by early daters, variously, as a product of 'additions,' 'a late reworking' or even 'a late redaction of the text.'

Perhaps the most obvious sign of the period of composition is the dating structure of the *Histories* itself, the implications of which have surprisingly

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50   Siegmund Hellmann, "Studien," 27–28 (rpt 83–84).

51   Wood, "Deconstructing the Merovingian Family," in *Construction of Communities*, (eds.) Corradini et al, 163–164, accepts the veracity of the suspicions.

52   *Historiography*, 25. His own assumption of graduated composition is posited on the notion that the *Histories* followed the pattern of VM, on which see ch. 4, below.

received little attention. It seems to me that if the *Histories* and its author were less well known and were unburdened by the scholarly assumptions and misconceptions that have for centuries defined the reading of the text, the dating structure would have quickly been recognized as *prima facie* evidence for showing composition under Childebert. It should be the evidence to beat for those asserting synchronicity, but instead it has been quietly folded into naive views about the relation of episcopacy and kingship in the Merovingian kingdom, with only the occasional eruption quieted by tendentious or bizarre explanations that would account for a process of composition under Chilperic.

As already noted, Gregory dates Books 5–10 after the regnal years of Childebert II, the underage, imperilled, king who succeeded Sigibert in December 575. Every one of the nine years in which Gregory and Tours were subject to Chilperic were dated in the *Histories* according to the reign of Childebert II, a period in which there was no particular sign that Chilperic was imminently about to go the way of all flesh. Gregory was an Austrasian loyalist, and could represent himself opposing Chilperic and Fredegund on matters of episcopal rights and theology, but he was not a political fool. He understood and sympathized with the political compromises bishops had to live with and he made them himself.[53] Books 5 and 6, as they stand, would have been treasonous were they composed under Chilperic. (So far as I know, no early dater has grasped the nettle on this question by arguing that the entire chronological structure of the *Histories* must be a late revision – because it leaves synchronicity in tatters). And in addition to the recognition of Childebert's legitimate claim to Tours as reflected in the dating system, the contents of the *Histories* themselves regarding Chilperic and Fredegund should speak for themselves, though efforts have been made to explain them away.[54] The only flutter to ruffle the feathers of synchronic daters is the artificial question of whether Gregory's *Histories* were brought to light during his treason trial in 580. Weighty, pointless reflections on this come inevitably to no resolution.[55]

The obvious way to read the chronological structure (and the contents) of Books 5–6 is as the product of Childebert's years of control over Tours, 585 to

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53   See his sympathetic treatment of Bishop Theodore of Marseilles, represented as obliged to follow orders issued by the Austrasian court in the name of Childebert (*Hist.* 6.24, 8.12, 13, 20). When Poitiers and Tours were threatened by Burgundian forces on the death of Chilperic in 584, Gregory's advice was completely pragmatic (*Hist.* 7.13). His deference to Fredegund's real wishes regarding Leudast's excommunication shows he well realized the limits of his position (*Hist.* 6.32).

54   See Halsall and Wood (as in n. 27), with Murray, "Chronology," 189–193.

55   See at n. 29.

Gregory's summing up in 594. The Austrasian character of the composition as a whole, however, imprints itself on more than just the books contemporary with Gregory's episcopate. The sections of the *Histories* from Book 3 onwards (that is following the death of Clovis) are written doggedly in Austrasian time – that is to say according to the dynastic chronology of the Austrasian house which ruled over Clermont from the time of Clovis' son Theuderic and claimed Tours from the time of Sigibert. Book 2 ends with the death of Clovis I, the ancestor of all subsequent Merovingian kings, it is true, but therefore also the founder of the Austrasian house and its kingdom. Book 3 and onward more clearly reveal the Austrasian cast to the organization of the books. The book ends with the death in 548 of Theudebert I, the greatest of Clovis' successors and ruler of the north-eastern kingdom and its southern appendages. Although the death of Chlothar I in 561, bringing with it the subsequent division among the warring kings of Gregory's generation, is the point modern commentators with good reason choose as the pregnant juncture for late 6th-century politics, Gregory places this event in the middle of Book 4. Book 4 ends instead with the death of the Austrasian king Sigibert I in 575. As a scion of the Clermont aristocracy, Gregory chose a method of dating that reveals his own loyalties to the Austrasian monarchy. The deaths of Clovis I, Theudebert I, and Sigibert I, form the basic architecture of Gregory's 6th-century chronology because Gregory in the first instance was writing his history for an Austrasian audience, and one can reasonably infer that an Austrasian king was in charge when it was laboriously drawn up.

This Austrasian structure to the *Histories* should also put to rest a recurring speculation about Gregory's plans for the work. Inferring that Gregory died before he could truly finish and noting his penchant for divisions marked by the death of kings, scholars have sometimes supposed Gregory's intention would have been to end with the death of a king. To compound the difficulty, they tend to believe that king to be Guntram, whom Gregory treats at some length, often, but not always, sympathetically.[56] But in fact there are good reasons to think Gregory's death did not preempt a resounding conclusion featuring Guntram, had the bishop wished a regal passing as an end point. First, Guntram was not Austrasian and so a grandiloquent obituary of him to end the *Histories* was never really in the master plan, to the extent that a truly contemporary history could have such a thing. Second, Guntram died in 592, after Gregory draws contemporary events to a close in 591, it is true, but before

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56   The royal fixation of the *Histoire litéraire de la France,* vol. 3 (Paris, 1735), 377, even makes such reflections a reality, characterizing the *Histories* as coming down to the death of Guntram.

wrapping up the *Histories* in 594. Gregory's works in fact acknowledge Guntram's death (*VM* 4.37). In the *Histories* Guntram's obituary is actually found in *Hist.* 9.21 s.a. 588, where Gregory's famous characterization of the Burgundian king's qualities are placed securely in the past tense. As will be noted below, Gregory's conclusion of political events in *Hist.* 10.28, perceived as a letdown by some modern commentators, is apt and in complete harmony with his views of Frankish politics.

The Austrasian structure of the *Histories* is not the only indication of the date of the composition. As previously noted, datable elements in the text confirm unambiguously writing in the years of Childebert's rule over Tours or point strongly to the same circumstance. These elements render futile the notion that we can tap into an unmediated diary recording events of the Chilperic years.

For example cross references in early books point to hagiographic compositions that we know were only written, sometimes quite late, during the years Childebert ruled Tours. Monod clearly saw that *Hist.* 4.36, with its allusion to *VP* 8, a late composition, had to have been written after 585. But he accepted the existence of an original six-book version and, almost by necessity, thought it must be an addition made at the time of the redaction of the 10-book version. We know there was no six-book version with additions made to it, only a six-book abridgement made after Gregory's death.

And *Hist.* 4.36 is not an isolated case. Bruno Krusch provides a list of thirteen other passages in Books 1–5 that cross-reference Gregory's hagiography and are a poor fit with an early date. To maintain his belief in an early date for the books in question, Krusch had to imagine a late textual reworking, allegedly still incomplete at Gregory's death.[57] The approach of Ruinart in his 1699 edition of Gregory's works was more logical if perhaps too simple. Well aware of the pattern of cross-references, he concluded from the circumstance that the *Histories* reference at some point all the *Miracula*, but the *Miracula* never refer to the *Histories*, that the *Histories* were written after the *Miracula*.[58]

Gregory also pointedly anticipates that events occurring under Chilperic will find their completion in later chapters in the years under Childebert. The best known example (because it is noted to be explained away as an addition) is Rauching in *Hist.* 5.3 s.a. 576. He is introduced as the husband of the new widow of Godin. His abuse of slaves and the sanctuary process is detailed and Gregory tells us he intends to relate the circumstance of his death at a

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57   See the critique in Murray, "Chronology," 176–178, which mentions other dissenters.
58   *PL* 71, §84.

later date. His execution by Childebert, described by Gregory, occurred in 587 (*Hist.* 9.9).

Again, the broad perspective on Rauching is not an isolated example. Gregory introduces Mummolus at great length in *Hist.* 4.42, 44, 45, telling us about his disreputable rise to the office of count, and then, as patrician of Guntram, his exploits, none of them altogether savoury, against Saxons and Lombards and rebellious citizens of Poitiers. This happened all in the pre-annal phase of the *Histories*, but these campaigns can be roughly dated ca 572–573. Gregory then tells us to be patient and to expect more in its proper spot.[59] That comes in a significant sense in Book 7 (34–39), where Mummolus as the leader of the Gundovald rebellion finally meets his end, once more after discreditable behaviour that bears out Gregory's earlier characterization. Then there is Bishop Sagittarius who appears in *Hist.* 5.20, s.a. 577, in company with his brother Salonius, involved in an episcopal scandal. Again Gregory tells us to wait for the outcome, namely their destruction by the anger of God. Salonius disappears from the narrative but Sagittarius has a starring role in the Gundovald debacle along with Mummolus, and has his head swept from his shoulders by a sword, hood and all, in the aftermath of the rebellion's suppression (*Hist.* 7.39).[60]

References to Rauching, Mummolus, and Sagittarius are hardly the result of an ad hoc piling up of events but are carefully crafted retrospective portrayals composed with knowledge of the later, sad outcomes in question. Mummolus' portrayal is the most circumstantial. He is introduced in Book 4 with a discursive account of his early career, and an implied warning about how this manner of life would turn out. But Gregory does not just wait until the outcome to wrap it up. Mummolus was too important to the narrative. Instead Mummolus is tracked (*Hist.* 5.13, 6.1, 6.24, 6.26) until his grand moment on stage in Book 7. The 7th-century redactor of the six-book version of the B manuscripts in the process of abridgement saw the implications very clearly. A Mummolus who did not go beyond Book 6 obviously escaped the finale implied by *Hist.* 4.45, and so he excised from his text Gregory's anticipation of a resolution.

Gregory tracks others as well, though their sorry tales cannot be pressed too hard on the Chilperic/Childebert composition question, as Gregory provides

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59   "What I have said about Mummolus is enough for the time being. The rest must be set out in order later on" (*Hist.* 4.45).

60   On the chronological layering of 5.20, see below, p. 90; for scholarly recognition of the implications of the narrative, and at least one effort to save appearances, see Murray, "Chronology," 180; and cf. n. 106.

no anticipatory signal of the outcome of their careers. Nevertheless I would regard the representation of their careers as no accidental accumulation of facts but as crafted expositions of figures whose recent demise came at the time of Gregory's writing and marked at least partially paid to their devious careers. Among the most prominent examples treated in this way are dukes Desiderius and Guntram Boso and Bishop Egidius of Rheims. Guntram Boso and Desiderius are both first noted in the wars of the 570s, Guntram being held responsible for the death of Theudebert, Chilperic's son, and the disgraceful treatment of his body (*Hist.* 4.50). His duplicitous behaviour is a running theme of Gregory's extended treatment of him, even if his charm is hard to hide.[61] Desiderius' career is first presented as a failure, and then as proceeding through brutality, stupidity, and treachery in the Gundovald affair, to a rash and ignominious death outside the walls of Carcassonne in 587.[62] Egidius' first appearance in 577 associates him, at least according to rumour which Gregory reports, with the disgraceful murder of Merovech and the shadowy role allegedly played in it by Guntram Boso and Fredegund, with whom Egidius had had supposedly a friendly relationship for some time (*Hist.* 5.18). Egidius' fall came in 590 in a trial highlighting his relationship with Chilperic, but after Gregory had described his role in negotiations with Chilperic regarding the Nogent agreement; his humiliation in the army mutiny by the Austrasian rank and file against the Neustrian-Austrasian alliance; his leadership of an unseemly embassy to Guntram; warnings given by Guntram to his nephew of Egidius' malicious influence; and the bishop's implication in a plot against King Childebert.[63]

Gregory's stance as a moralist is not simplistic; his portraits, spread across the episodes of his books, do not always simply retail elements of uniform moral significance. Gregory was perfectly capable of neutral reporting about some of the subjects of his extended portraits, but the overall burden of representation and Gregory's judgment of the destructive effect of various actors on Gallic affairs from the 570s through the 580s is hard to miss. That Gregory could combine harsh judgments of individuals in one place with neutral reporting of their actions in another has long been noted without the conclusion being drawn that this reflected synchronicity and shifting agendas on the part of the author. Disarticulating the elements of Gregory's portraits, as some recent

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61   *Hist.* 4.50; 5.4; 5.14; 5.18; 5.24; 5.25; 6.24; 6.26; 6.31; 8.20; 9.8; 9.10; 9.23.

62   Ibid., 5.13; 5.39; 6.12; 6.31; 7.9–10; 7.27; 7.34; 7.43; 8.27; 8.45.

63   Ibid., 5.18; 6.2; 6.31; 7.13; 7.33; 9.14; 10.19. Wood's treatment of the trial claims to finds Gregory sympathetic to Egidius: see, "Secret Histories," 268; *Gregory*, 20.

scholars have done, can lead to wildly inaccurate evaluations of the bishop's relationship with the figures in his narrative.[64]

These examples show us something about Gregory's general method. Though with major villains like Rauching, Mummolus, and Sagittarius, Gregory cannot help himself from anticipating their demise, his practice is nevertheless to place events where they belong in the chronological sequence; events and biographies that we might be inclined to assume should be telegraphed, indeed shouted out, to the reader, are quietly placed in their proper order. Their meaning is expected to reveal itself in the reading of the text – and Gregory surely expected knowledgeable readers to have awareness of the characters in question on their first appearance.[65] This is all part of Gregory's famed 'episodic style,' which bears comparison with chronicle writing and its placement of narrative elements in their appropriate spot.

One can think of this as Gregory's default style, but it hardly met all his narrative needs and he did not feel strictly bound by it unless it suited his purposes. From Book 5 onwards Gregory's chapters always contained an element datable to the year in which he placed it, but the form could be complicated by intricate chronological layering of some chapters, and even sequences of chapters, that precludes them being composed near in time to the year in which the principal event is placed. Chapters not in the episodic style belie the view of the *Histories* as a diary of a naive chronicler.

For example, *Hist.* 5.5 s.a. 576, a passage famous for recounting the intrafamilial feud involving Gregory's brother, Peter, and his eventual death in 574. The reason for the dating and placement of the chapter at this point is a rude

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64   See Chilperic, above n. 27, and Chlothar, below at n. 71, as examples among the kings; and Murray, "Chronology," 189–190. Some have thought Egidius was a friend or patron because the bishop of Rheims was ordered to consecrate him (Fortunatus, *Car.* 5.3), hardly an indicator of warm relations (Gregory must have consecrated Badegisil of Le Mans! [*Hist.* 6.9; 8.39]), and because, in a passage written after Egidius' fall in *VM* 3.17, Gregory happens to mention that he was once graciously received by Egidius in Rheims. See Murray, "Chronology," n. 119.

65   The style evinced by Gregory is apparently by no means dead, because it has immediacy and dramatic narrative purposes. See a (positive) review in the *New York Times* of a recent biography of Barbara Stanwyck by Victoria Wilson, who sticks rigorously to the 'time frame' of her subject, sometimes to the consternation of the reviewer. The book covers the years 1907–1940, with a second volume promised. The reviewer complains: "As an example of Wilson's determination to stay in the moment, when Ruby [Barbara Stanwyck] befriends an even wilder girl-about-town named Billie Cassin, a.k.a. Lucille LeSueur, Wilson doesn't even mention at that point that she is the future Joan Crawford!" Sunday Book Review, January 5, 2014.

letter from Felix of Nantes involving a dispute over a villa that the chapter ignores. The chapter is called "On the Bishops of Langres" and gives not only an account of Peter's troubles but a brief sketch of the bishopric of Langres, long a preserve of Gregory's family, from the 560s to the 580s (certainly *post* 582). Gregory achieves much in the chapter (including the disparagement of Felix, an enemy and one of his bêtes noires) but the occasion for its placement is merely incidental to these designs.[66]

Another example already touched on, is *Hist.* 5.20 s.a. 577, which alludes to Bishop Sagittarius' death in 585. But the chapter recounts his wicked career and that of his brother Salonius, and their recalcitrant ways, going back at least to 570, when a council dealt with their transgressions. It is not completely clear whether the entry of *Hist.* 5.20 is recording a second or third outrage at their behaviour or whether some of their antics mentioned here go beyond 577. Their criminal condemnation by a council, at any rate, came again but only in 579; Gregory leaves notice of that to its proper place (*Hist.* 5.27).

Or *Hist.* 6.37–39 s. a. 584, an interrelated series of chapters involving ecclesiastical politics that presuppose not only purposeful juxtaposition but a date of composition ca 587 or afterward. Though the placement and genesis of the intricately linked events are placed deep in the last year of Chilperic, their resolution, described by Gregory, could only have been composed under Childebert II.[67]

These chapters all suggest chronological complexity and distant perspective, but some chapters, plain enough in their contents, simply show distance between event and composition. *Hist.* 8.30, s.a. 585, for example, presupposes a date of composition after the treaty of Andelot in 587, because Gregory notes that cities restored to Childebert at the time were contributing forces to the Burgundian army in 585. Even widespread acceptance of theories of graduated composition has not quashed recognition that material in even early books of the *Histories* may be the result of late composition. Buchner, for one, has suggested that Gregory's knowledge of Antiochene and Armenian affairs was derived from the visit of the Armenian bishop Simon to Tours in 591 (*Hist.* 10.24), though Gregory places the events themselves appropriately enough in the 570s (*Hist.* 4.40).[68]

It is hardly likely that the chronological excavation of the chapters of the *Histories* is exhausted.

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66   Lengthier discussion in Murray, "Chronology," 180–182.

67   For an extensive discussion, see Murray, "Chronology," 182–185.

68   Buchner, *Zehn Bücher* 2: 382 n. 4.

One final signature of Gregory's distance from chapters, and occasionally an indicator of compositional date, is his deliberate use of past and present tenses in reference to figures in the narrative. I am not referring to the events or actions that the figures were involved in – these are in the past tense (or in an historical present that means the same thing) – but rather the characterization of the existential qualities or attributes of being of the character. Thus Guntram Boso's penchant for lying and betraying his friends is cast in the past tense in *Hist.* 5.14, s.a. 576, the same chapter that mentions the prophecy about Chilperic and his sons, the composition of which I have already suggested lies squarely after Chilperic's death in 584. Guntram Boso was executed in 587 and his lying days were done at the time of writing *Hist.* 5.14. On the other hand, the devil's were not: in the same chapter we are told that he – in the present tense – is a liar from the beginning. In *Hist.* 5. 19, again one of the parade pieces of synchronicity, we are told that Tiberius, introduced in the past tense, "was a great and true Christian," destroying any idea of synchronicity, which the passage does not support anyway, but showing a date of composition after Tiberius' death. And while Guntram Boso had a (past) predilection for lying, his namesake King Guntram (*Hist.* 9.21 s.a. 588) had had a similar, by the time of writing, past proclivity for almsgiving, vigils, and fasting. This too marks the time of writing as after his death; as suggested above the passage as a whole is really Guntram's obituary. Its reiteration in medieval and modern sources pretty much fulfills Gregory's intention.[69]

3.7   When Did Gregory Compose his Histories?

The premise of the previous pages is simply that Gregory of Tours' *Histories* are the product of the period following the year 585 when Tours was restored to the Austrasian King Childebert II. There is actually no evidence that any part of the *Histories* (I include here the far less contentious Books 1–4) was written prior to Childebert's taking control of the city in 585 and a great deal of evidence points to a compositional date after that time. This leaves out a lot we might like to know. We do not know the phases of composition of the *Histories*. It is too big to have been written from scratch over a short period of time just prior to the bishop's death in 594, but when Gregory took up his pen, or began dictating to his secretaries, are developments lost to us. Such considerations do

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69   A counterpart to the characterizations in the past tense for those deceased are those put in the present tenses for individuals still alive in the 590s: Avitus † 594 (*Hist.* 4.35); Theodore of Marseilles † 591/594 (*Hist.* 8.12); Sulpicius of Bourges †591 (*Hist.* 8.12 s.a. 585).

not preclude Gregory writing notes or memoranda at any time during his epis-
copacy, or indeed during his literate lifetime. But such writings did not consti-
tute the *Histories* as we now have them. These were written after 585 at a time
when Tours was under the control of the Austrasian king, Childebert II. And
Gregory, I believe, was hardly finished tinkering with his text when he died in
594, though at that time he brought the work into a near final shape. But does
any of this matter very much? Synchronicity between event and narrative is a
false key. No part of the *Histories* was published before the year of his death
and to say that they reflect a view of around 590 and seem to have been finally
shaped from around that date to his death should serve more than adequately
the varied purposes of scholars grappling with their significance for contem-
porary and distant history.

3.8   Gregory's Political Viewpoint: The Basics

This brings me at last to the principal reason for this chapter – a brief state-
ment about the main outlines of Gregory's political perspective in his *Histories*.
When the bishop of Tours started to put his history together, Chilperic was
dead at the hands of an assassin, having "got what he asked for" (*Hist.* 7.2). He
could be condemned as Gregory saw fit and his devious actions, as well as the
rumours that flew about the various deaths in the circle around the king, could
be reported freely without fear of retribution. Having been a metropolitan
bishop of the king, and a guardian of the shrine of Saint Martin, where he had
to provide for high status asylum seekers fleeing the wrath of Chilperic and
Fredegund, Gregory knew a lot and had heard even more. As for Fredegund,
"the enemy of God and man" (*Hist.* 9.20), as Guntram called her, she had been
removed to Rouen in 585 to look after her son Chlothar II and was no longer a
personal concern; Gregory could be unsparing in depicting her involvement in,
among other crimes, the assassination of Sigibert and the killing of her mature
stepsons to further the claims of her own, young children by Chilperic. Gregory
was free to catalogue her intrigues and murderous behaviour as the bitter rival
of Brunhild and fearsome adversary of Guntram's possessive, and Childebert's
hostile, interest in her son's kingdom.

   Chilperic's reign was in the past. Guntram's was not, at least not until a year
after Gregory's narrative halted in 591 and a year or so before he drew the
Histories to a close. Guntram ruled Tours after Chilperic, but a point often lost
sight of in current commentaries is that he did so only for a brief time in late
584 and the first part of 585. Gregory could depict the various sides of Guntram,
including his suspicion and impulsive outbursts, while admiring the king for

his piety and treatment of the church. This positive portrait of Guntram, by the way, is not the consequence of constraint or invention on Gregory's part. The source used by Fredegar in the following century echoes the same themes of goodness, piety and harmonious relations with the episcopate (*Chron.* 4.1). The present rulers of Tours, Childebert and his mother Brunhild, demanded slightly more discreet, but not uncritical, attention.[70]

The period following Chilperic's death hardly meant the end of important Gallic events to record. As indicated in my preliminary remarks, Gregory was not fixated on the reign of Chilperic, though the portrait of the king is memorable. The epicentre of the *Histories*, to judge by the density of the narrative, occurs in Book 7, which covers a mere six months and mainly concerns the short-lived attempt by the pretender Gundovald to challenge the monopoly on legitimate power held by the accepted sons of Chlothar I. There were also frustrated attempts by Austrasian nobles to overthrow the rule of Childebert and his mother; deaths to record of big and devious players in the politics of the last decade; and finally the downfall of Egidius of Reims, one of the main architects of the contentious alliance between the Austrasian court and Chilperic made at Nogent almost a decade earlier.

As Gregory brought his *Histories* to a close, there was still plenty of potential for serious internecine conflicts among the present kings and their supporters and no prospect that this condition would improve when the new generation divided the vast territories of Austrasia and Burgundy. (This, I argue above, is the broader context for the Prologue to Book 5 – and consequently Books 6–10, not just the immediate events of the 570s.) Gregory's final political vignette (*Hist.* 10.28) portrays the baptism of Chlothar II in the presence of his uncle, and godfather, Guntram, and the remonstrance of Childebert's envoys. Some scholars, disarticulating Gregory's views, have inferred from this incident that in the end the bishop finally put his hope for the future in Chlothar II, the young son of Fredegund and Chilperic.[71] *We* know that Chlothar quite implausibly came out on top in the civil wars twenty years later, but Gregory did not. In fact, Gregory left the kings as he found them – quarrelling – and, considering his earlier intimations about the child king and his mother Fredegund,

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70   The triad of chapters mentioned above at n. 67 (*Hist.* 6.37-39) manages to compare the queen's role in episcopal appointment unfavourably to that of Guntram's and implies she was involved in the killing of an abbot.

71   Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 57; and see Marc Reydellet, *La Royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Seville* (Rome, 1981), 355, 359 and 427 on the allegedly positive implications of the baptism. Reydellet even imagines the bishop of Tours attempting to convince himself of Chlothar's legitimacy, though having once doubted it.

without dispelling the uneasy suspicion he had created that the young Chlothar might not be the son of Chilperic at all.[72]

Much more can be said about the politics of the *Histories*. This simple and incomplete sketch is merely proposed as a starting point for considering the implications of Gregory's narrative, and will serve, I hope, as a sound basis for critically approaching political commentaries, both old and new, that seek to explicate the *Histories* and 6th-century Gallic history.

Let me conclude this section with some remarks on the question of fear which has played such a large role in recent expositions. In identifying Gregory's fears, the creators of political portraits paradoxically look to the figures about whom the bishop of Tours wrote most freely: Chilperic and Guntram. The latter's portrait is particularly rounded and varied and rivalled in vividness only by the depiction of Fredegund, his arch villainess. For Gregory to have told us so much about those whom he allegedly feared most seems incongruous. What marks each of these evocative portraits is that by the time Gregory was writing, he was out of the reach of all of them. The marker of real fear is silence, which is uncommonly hard to explore and occurs for many reasons. Where the sound of silence is most striking, though is hardly complete, is in the portraits of Childebert and Brunhild, rulers whom Gregory must have known well, whom he served and to whom he owed political allegiance, and who were still alive and in power as he brought his *Histories* to a close. Whether fear or discretion explains his cautious depiction of the Austrasian house is one of those questions worth further exploration.

Appendix   Gregory, The Unreliable Narrator: The Bishop of Tours and Chilperic, Once Again

Scepticism about Gregory's narrative is nothing new. As already noted, scholars have for some time been wary about his knowledge of distant events, and especially the accuracy of his chronology in the late 5th and early 6th century, though they are divided on the extent to which there are errors and whether these are marks of an agenda by which Gregory manipulated some of his material.[73] It has also seemed wise to many (even to those treating him as a naïve purveyor of the events of his day) to take his Catholic and episcopal perspective into consideration and to read his judgment of figures in the *Histories*

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72   Reydellet's views (as in previous note) have hardly escaped unscathed: Goffart, *Narrators,* 185–186; Heinzelmann, *Gregor,* 184.

73   See n. 4, above.

against his prejudices. Historians for instance have often expressed sympathetic understanding of Chilperic's outburst against the bishops, as reported in Gregory's obituary – and for good reasons.[74] Reading Gregory is undeniably a critical undertaking, and scholarly disagreement is its natural accompaniment, because it usually involves pushing the text beyond the self-evident meaning of the moment or contextualizing it in such a way as to open up new meanings. But the recent scholarship that has just been canvassed dealing with the political Gregory may have introduced a new dimension to the interpretative discourse – namely the notion that the bishop of Tours is fundamentally an unreliable narrator.[75] The 'unreliable narrator' is the term for a literary device whereby the reader is (or becomes) aware that a narrator is not telling the truth, or at least the whole truth. Gregory himself, it should be noted, frequently uses the technique himself, giving figures speeches that contradict what he has just told us has happened; the reader is supposed to be in on the lie, even if gullible listeners in the text may not be. Now, however, readers of the *Histories* have been assured that in effect Gregory himself is the unreliable narrator. The scholar interpreting him is the new reliable author, pointing out the falsities of Gregory's narrative or claiming privileged understanding of an alleged subtext. The result is the displacement of Gregory's narrative in favour of the modern commentator's, which the reader is to understand is the real story of the *Histories*. The method is capable of producing, not just tweaks and adjustments to the bishop's narrative, but a massive rewriting of it and consequently the main lines of 6th-century Gallic political history, which depends largely (though not quite exclusively) on Gregory's work. The approach is illustrated in a recent treatment of Gregory as an unreliable narrator by Marc

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74   For the context behind Chilperic's remarks, see Alexander Callander Murray, "Merovingian Immunity Revisited," *History Compass* 8/8 (2010) : 920–921, 926 n. 33. Cf. Heinzelmann, *Gregory,* 190–191, for a sympathetic attempt to understand Chilperic's position within competing ecclesiological perspectives.

75   The grand daddy of this kind of approach might seem to be the ominously titled article by Bruno Krusch, "Die Unzuverlässigkeit der Geschichtsschreibung Gregor von Tours," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österrreichische Geschichtsforschung* 45 (1931), 486–490. But the problems to be solved by Krusch's self-described superior knowledge of Gregory's sources, though valuable, are all minor, chronologically early, or in the scheme of things, prosaic. Like a headline in an internet tabloid, the title fails to deliver despite Gregory being described as the author of legends that have deceived the world for a thousand years! That would be, one supposes, until about 1600. That the principal items are about the early Franks – a sensitive subject to Krusch's contemporaries – probably accounts for the hyperbole. They have no bearing on Gregory's contemporary narrative. When Krusch in passing tells us that Chlodio's Dispargum was the first residence of a "German (*deutsch*) king," it is apparent that he has some reliability problems of his own.

Widdowson; it is largely independent of graduated or synchronic composition in its argument, though it appears to assume such.[76]

The big picture of Gallic political history that it seeks to overthrow runs like this, following Gregory. Frankish politics in the 6th century are characterized by four partitions (or five if we go just beyond Gregory's death), each based on some idea of partible inheritance as a principle allocating the territories of the kingdom to its Merovingian heirs. The *first* was the division of 511 shared by the four sons of Clovis. The *second* took place after the death of Chlodomer in 524; his surviving sons, being groomed for the kingship by their grandmother Chlothild, were murdered by Chlothar I and Childebert I, and the kingdom of their father divided by their uncles. The *third* was the partition of 561, in which the four sons of Chlothar I, the surviving son of Clovis, again divided the kingdom. The division as recorded by Gregory, however, took place after Chilperic attempted to anticipate his brothers by occupying Paris; the final outline of the division was forced upon Chilperic by his brothers. The *fourth* occurred in 567/8 when one of the brothers, Charibert, died and his territories were shared among his surviving siblings.[77] This division reverberates in Gregory's narrative of the political events of his episcopacy. The *fifth* occurred in 596, two years after Gregory's death, when Childebert of Austrasia died after inheriting most of the vast territory ruled by his uncle Guntram of Burgundy. This expanded kingdom was divided between Childebert's two sons, Theudebert and Theuderic.

With particular regard to the first, third, and the fourth divisions, Widdowson seeks to establish the following points. The heritability and partibility of the kingdom was never the normal practice of the Merovingian kings and their followers. Partible inheritance was only the view of one faction (which Gregory represents in his *Histories*). Instead a unitary kingdom was the practice, which Widdowson implies, reflects the legitimate principle of Merovingian succession. Consequently there was no division of 511.[78] Theuderic, Clovis' son by a concubine, succeeded to the kingdom as a whole by Widdowson's account, only permitting his half brothers (by Chlothild) to oversee particular regions when they came of age. Similarly, he argues, in 561, Chlothar had intended for the entire kingdom to go to his favourite, Chilperic, but his brothers rebelled against his authority. Chilperic thus fought thereafter to restore his legitimate authority over his rebellious brothers (and of

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76   Marc Widdowson, "Merovingian Partitions: A Genealogical Charter?" *Early Medieval Europe* 17/1 (2009), 1–22.

77   On the date, see below, ch. 12 at n. 23.

78   This reconfiguration of Gregory has been anticipated by a distant predecessor in the *Grandes Chroniques de France,* 2.1, (ed.) J. Viard, Société de l'Histoire de France, 10 vols. (Paris, 1920–1953) 1: 95, which, though accepting multiple concurrent Merovingian kings, held that there was only one king of France at a time – namely the king who ruled from Paris. I want to thank Courtney Dahlke for alerting me to this reference.

course was the rightful king of Tours; Gregory was merely a partisan of Sigibert's party); Sigibert in fact may only have been able to wrest the title of king in 575, as he prepared to eliminate Chilperic.[79] It follows from this view, apparently, that there could have been no division in 567 because it would have been illegitimate.

There is some history to Widdowson's claims, other than simply the view that Gregory is a devious narrator. All but the last of them do not quite come out of the blue.

Ian Wood in 1977 argued that the succession and division of 511 was not some long-standing practice but the result of a political settlement in the wake of Clovis' death between Theuderic and Chlothild, representing her sons, in conjunction with the Frankish aristocracy and the Gallo-Roman bishops. Of this suggestion, he wrote at the time: "This recreation of events is necessarily speculative."[80] His views have apparently clarified themselves with time, and his initial reservation has been set aside.[81] Wood cast his arguments as an assault upon the notion of partible inheritance, drawing a dichotomy, for some reason, between inheritance practices and the political context of succession.[82] Though Wood seems to regard 511 as setting a precedent that set the norm for subsequent divisions based on partible inheritance,[83] in Widdowson's retelling partible inheritance becomes simply a notion espoused by those excluded by the normal, legitimate, single heir. Obviously from this perspective Gregory's narrative must be wrong, or worse.

Such is the source for 511. Behind Widdowson's account of 561 lies Marc Reydellet's analysis of Fortunatus' panegyric to Chilperic on the occasion of the synod at Berny in 580, an occasion in which Gregory had to defend himself on charges of treason for defaming the character of Fredegund.[84] This is the key to

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79   Widdowson piles up the 'may have's' and 'could have's,' and the like, rather precipitously but such caveats are tactical and hardly impinge on the thrust of his narrative and the marginalization of Gregory's.

80   The argument made to reach this point is often tendentious, but the inconclusive supposition is at least in its own terms reasonable. Ian Wood, "Kings, Kingdoms and Consent," in *Early Medieval Kingship*, (eds.) P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds, 1977), 26; and cf., "events of 511 can never be known" (ibid.).

81   *The Merovingian Kingdoms* (London/New York, 1994), 58.

82   The dichotomy Wood draws between 'tradition' = partible inheritance and politics, as if they were clean different things, seems oddly naive (or just thesis-driven) to me. The dichotomy does not really exist.

83   To go by "Royal Succession and Legitimation in the Roman West, 419–536" in *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (eds.) Stuart Airlie et al., (Vienna, 2006), 64–65 and *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 136. Although compare his treatment in the latter of 561, at n. 85, below.

84   Reydellet, *La Royauté*, 309–313. The circumstances of the synod have sparked some comment; see Roberts, with literature, above ch. 2, at n. 29.

Widdowson's argument because the panegyric is supposed to put in question Gregory's sincerity.[85] Reydellet noted Fortunatus' claim in the panegyric that Chilperic was his father's favourite and concluded that the elder Chlothar had intended him to be his privileged heir ("son héritier privilegié"). Wood took this idea up in 1994, speculating that "Chlothar may have intended that Chilperic alone should succeed."[86] Widdowson tries to enrol Gregory in his narrative, assuring us more than once that the *Histories* tell us that Chilperic took "*the* throne" [my italics] right after Chlothar's death, whereas what Gregory actually says is that Chilperic moved on Paris and occupied the residence of his uncle Childebert I (*Hist.* 4.22), the seat of his uncle prior to the succession of Chlothar I.

Fortunatus' flatteringly equivocal evocation of Chilperic's virtues can hardly be pinned down with the precision that Widdowson would like. Reydellet plausibly suggested that in all of its abstract expression, the panegyric did tell us something about the preferred propaganda of the Neustrian court. But what exactly was that, and was it true? Widdowson thinks he knows exactly what that was – not just that Chilperic was the apple of his father's eye but that he was intended as sole heir of the entire kingdom – and yes, it was absolutely true; furthermore, he adds, there could have been no division in 561 because it would have been illegitimate.[87] Marius of Avenches († ca 581) in the Burgundian region, and an occasional, rare external confirmation of Gregory's narrative, mentions the division among the four kings under the year 561 of his *Chronicle*.[88] Widdowson dismisses him as another partisan of the faction supporting partible inheritance.[89]

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85   In terms of his presentation, Widdowson actually begins his paper by invoking a model drawn from African anthropology (Laura Bohannan, "A Genealogical Charter," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 22/4 [1952]: 301–315) in which genealogical data can be invented for contemporary purposes. But the 6th-century issue is royal inheritance practices, not genealogy at all. Widdowson (apart from inventing a King Sigivald for some reason) accepts the basic genealogy of the main players as provided by Gregory.

86   This comment sits equally beside two other quite contrary ones: a paraphrase of Gregory's quite short account; and speculation that Chilperic as the single son of Aregund moved quickly to prevent his being excluded by his half-brothers. Later Wood seems to presume multiple succession was normal Merovingian practice. *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 59, 136; but then again, just to keep you on your toes, cf. 60.

87   And, for the same reason so too the division of 567.

88   *La Chronique de Marius d'Avenches* (455–581), (ed.) and trans. Justin Favrod (Lausanne, 1993), s.a. For an English translation: Alexander Callander Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2000), 105.

89   The invention of faction is often the last refuge of scholars with bad sources for their point of view and has been developed imaginatively by political historians dealing with the poorly documented late 7th and early 8th century. Invocation of it is not always unwarranted as a general condition, but as an explanatory device in particular contexts, it should require a modicum of evidence. See Alexander Callander Murray," So-called

But even if Fortunatus' tribute to Chilperic floats in a wispy inflated cloud of hyperbole, it can fit the spare details that Gregory gives us without much trouble. Chlothar, Fortunatus tells us, recognized that Chilperic deserved better (things), *meliora*.[90] This is not what he got in 561. Chilperic was pushed out of Paris (which I take to be the prize and the key to Merovingian politics throughout the last half of the 6th century) by his brothers who imposed on him in the settlement that followed a measly slice of territory with few prospects of enlargement, an unjust outcome for (in Fortunatus' terms) the favourite son.[91] Gregory is clear that this *is* the division of 561, not whatever putative arrangements were made by Chlothar and the Franks before the king's death. There should be no surprise (with or without Fortunatus) about Chilperic's resentment over the events of 561 (and then 567/8). Fortunatus also tells us that Fortune, which at first had been jealous of Chilperic, had now restored him to the "better things" he had been denied.[92] By 580, when Fortunatus presented his panegyric, Chilperic was in the ascendency. Paris was his. Sigibert was dead. And Chilperic was successfully running roughshod over cities in the south. But, on the other hand, Sigibert's son Childebert was king in Austrasia, as was Chilperic's brother Guntram in Burgundy. To the panegyrist, the restoration of Chilperic's fortunes did not entail kingship over a united Frankish kingdom because even the court of Chilperic did not go that far in its claims.

Widdowson's final claim is this: while Gregory was a partisan of the partible-inheritance faction his personal interests were paramount. The Treaty of Andelot, which Widdowson construes as the product of Gregory himself and a faction of like-minded magnates, in supporting the assumption of partibility in the past, was designed to remove Gregory from the control of Guntram and into the hands of, apparently, a much more malleable Childebert; indeed in the end perhaps his aim was only to strengthen his control over his metropolitanate against locals still resentful of his appointment in 573. By this account Gregory begins to resemble a kind of low-concept Egidius of Rheims, fearful

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Fictitious Trial in the Merovingian *Placita*," in Gallien in *Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Kulturegeschichte einer Region*, (eds.) Steffen Diefenbach and Gernot Müller (Berlin, 2013), 297–327, esp. 312 n. 55.

90   Fortunatus, *Carm.* 9.1.35: "Agnoscebat enim te iam meliora mereri." Here and below, at n. 91, I do not follow Reydellet's translation ('higher' for *meliora*), which in any case he changed for his edition, 3: 10. Cf. Judith George, Venantius *Fortunatus: A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul* (Oxford, 1992)*,* 200.

91   See Map 4, for the division of 561. The territories of the kingdom in 561 (and presumably the 511 division was similar) were sliced like a pie (or wheel of cheese, as a student once suggested), centring on the northern areas around Orleans, Paris, Soissons, and Rheims.

92   *Carm.* 9.1.55: "fortuna...meliora dedit;" and cf. 60: "aspera non nocuit sed te sors dura probavit:/ unde gravabaris, celsior redis."

of losing his seat and manipulating two kingdoms to maintain his apparently precarious position. And this, as a 'just-so story' would tell us, is how the hidden agenda of the bishop of Tours came to completely misrepresent the history of 6th-century Gaul.

The problems with Widdowson's reconstruction and analysis of Andelot are legion. I will only comment on one unnoticed chronological fact. By 587, when the Treaty of Andelot was negotiated between Guntram on one side and Childebert and Brunhild on the other, Tours was already under the control of Childebert, and had been for two years or more. At the time when Gregory was supposedly plotting to attach himself to Childebert, the bishop of Tours had actually been dealing with the young king, who had already reached his majority by Andelot – indeed Gregory had been in his service as a spokesman (*Hist.* 8.13 s.a. 585). I leave aside the question of the king's interfering mother, who, whatever one might guess about her son, was anything but pliable.

This critique just scrapes the surface of Widdowson's reconstruction and the point of it is not really to challenge it in detail, but, as some readers must surely have noticed, to question the method it employs.[93]

Most of what we can know of 6th-century politics in Gaul comes from Gregory of Tours (and not just the *Histories*). This is a fact of studying the period. Attempts to tap oblique perspectives (such as Marius or Fortunatus or saints' lives) are worthwhile but, so far, appear limited in their ability to alter his narrative, though they can confirm it and add to it. Gregory's near singularity does not mean he must be right – or, conversely, according to some contrarian conviction, that he must be wrong. Critical method, however inadequate this might be at times, can help but it can hardly prove absolutely the truth or falseness of what Gregory says – which should hardly be an intellectual hardship for a modern historian of the period. To overcome our reliance on Gregory, by inventing a counter narrative that, even when it relies on his (which it must), depends on distorting it, is hardly an advance. The narrative of inversion that this approach produces not only reverses judgments of the narrator but also what reasonably can be accepted as the facts of the narrative, which are turned upside down. It presupposes far more than the usual faults staining the intellectual commitment of a narrator to his subject and places duplicity at the centre of his overall purpose. Discovering a fundamentally duplicitous agenda marginalizes the medieval author and centres the modern author's

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93   Partible inheritance was a characteristic feature of Merovingian succession throughout the 6th-century and a tenet of the political and military class that supported the kings. A more wide-ranging discussion is in preparation. Some of the assumptions about the subject in recent literature are flawed.

thesis, which can then slice through the text as if it were the Gordian knot, deploying its bits at will and sometimes in contradictory ways. The burden of proof seems to be shifted from the modern scholar to the medieval text. In practice the approach is tantamount to the Hollywood claim, 'based on a true story.'

The origin of this unreliable Gregory, the mischievous narrator, lies in the synchronic interpretation of his politics as developed in the last generation. It remains to be seen whether it will have a life of its own, divorced from the chronology of composition problem, and whether in possibly multiple forms it becomes a new chaotic slant on Gregory that readers from now on will have to deal with. All historical narrators are in some sense unreliable, not because they are wilfully telling us lies, though they might be, but because, no matter their earnestness, they are presenting a point of view. Recognizing Gregory's point of view obviously requires more on our part than a reliance on old clichés about his naiveté and superstition. But, on the other hand, we should not jump to the conclusion that Gregory was the Loki of 6th-century history.

Chronology, Composition, and Authorial Conception in the *Miracula*

Richard Shaw

Questions about the dating of Gregory of Tours' *Miracula* are as frustrating as making sense of a drawing by Escher. In his famous pictures illustrating the illusions of perspective, stairs lead upward to one floor, then up again to another, then up a further flight, before the final staircase leads upwards somehow back to the start. The eye has been moving higher the entire time, each floor dependent on the other, but somehow we end back at the beginning. So it is with dating Gregory's *Miracula*.[1] Various kinds of dating

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1   Abbreviations for Gregory's works are those set out at the beginning of this volume. References to Krusch and page number are to the preface, or notes, in the MGH edition of the *Miracula*. For simplicity, translations, unless noted, will be by the following translators, cited with the respective abbreviations: GM = Raymond Van Dam; VJ = Raymond Van Dam; VM = Raymond Van Dam; VP = Edward James; GC = Raymond Van Dam; PS = William McDermott;

indicators, often taken individually in arguments about dating, when taken as a whole and as an interdependent group, contradict each other. At the same time the author's conception of his works, individually and as a collective endeavor, can be shown to have shifted significantly over time. In the end, the interlacing character of the *Miracula* render the question of dating largely moot, seemingly reflecting a corpus that, with the exception of the first three books of the *VM*, was not finally completed, and seems to have been left unpublished at death.

4.1   The State of the Question

4.1.1   *Earlier Treatments*

Given the relatively limited consideration Gregory's hagiography has received, it is no surprise that the issue of dating the books of the *Miracula* has rarely been at the forefront of scholars' minds. What earlier treatments there have been have usually attempted to identify apparently datable material in the works and then use that information to establish limits for the composition of the texts.[2] The resulting schemas thus provide an implicit fixed order of authorship of the works. The two most influential, and still useful, attempts to answer the question were by Monod and Krusch more than a century ago. Monod proposed the following dates for the *Miracula*'s completion: *VM* 1: 574–575; *VM* 2: 577–581; *VJ*: 582–586; *GM*: 586–587; *VM* 3: 582–587; *GC*: 587–588, with the prologue written in 594; and *VM* 4: 591–594. Monod argued that the chapters of the *VP* were written at different times, but that they were brought together by Gregory at the end of his life: the *VP*'s preface, he argued, was from 594, but postdated that of the *GC*.[3]

Krusch's analysis has had more impact, but does not differ greatly. The dates he suggested for completion were: *GM*: ca 590 (and after 585, but pre-591); *VJ*: 581–587, with *VJ* 50, which mentions *VP* 8, on Nicetius, and was in Krusch's view written 590–592, added later; *VM* 1: 573–576; *VM* 2: 581; *VM* 3: 587; *VM* 4: written after 592 but unfinished at death; *VP*: the preface and chapters 7 and 8 written

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Hist. = Lewis Thorpe). References to the introductions or notes of these translations will be to name of translator, abbreviated title of the work, and page and/or footnote number.

2   Since the *PS* and *MA* are both translations and there is indeed still some uncertainty as to the authenticity of the latter, they reveal little about the question of dating either of themselves or of other works of Gregory. They will therefore be dealt with only tangentially here.

3   Monod, *Études critiques sur les sources de l'histoire mérovingienne, 1e partie* (Paris, 1872), 42–45.

after the rest of the book was finished (and after the *GC*), but *VP* 12, 15, 16, 17, 19 all composed before the *GC*; *GC*: finished in 587, but Gregory added the prologue, and some chapters,[4] from 590 onwards.[5] As if this was not complex enough, Krusch emphasized the extent to which Gregory returned later to rework the texts.

Since Monod and Krusch, the question has received little attention. The best, sustained, modern treatment of the issue is found in Raymond Van Dam's introductions to his recent translations of the miracle books.[6] He argued for the following dating: *GC*: 587–588; *GM*: by 588; and *VJ*: early 580s.[7] Thus, the various dating schemes all imply a fixed order of composition of the *Miracula* books, with work on each beginning and ending at definite, and essentially, separate times, with little overlap between them.

Between these three scholars, there are very few potentially relevant dating elements that have not been identified. In order to see the state of the question more clearly it may be helpful to summarize the three sets of opinions on the issue in Table 4.1.

Even presented in this simplified form the complex character of the *Miracula* should be apparent. What readers will not see in the chart is recognition of the mutual cross-references between the books which compound the problem of establishing comparative chronologies of composition among them. So complex in fact is the problem that Van Dam, like Krusch before him, having presented his scheme of dating felt obliged to acknowledge that, "Gregory also constantly supplemented and revised what he had already written."[8] Edward James, in the introduction to his translation of the *VP*, made a similar point: "precise dating of any part of Gregory's works is hardly possible. ...Gregory clearly worked on most of his books simultaneously during his episcopate,

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4   For instance, *GC* 60 in 590 and *GC* 24 after 591.

5   Krusch, 451–456.

6   *GM*; *GC*; *VJ* and *VM* 1–4. Van Dam's introductions (and notes to the texts), despite their brevity, are real contributions to the field.

7   Although Van Dam did not specifically state his views about the dating of *VM* 1–4, they can be deduced from what he did say: *VM* 1: 573–576; *VM* 2: 580–581; *VM* 3: by July 588; *VM* 4: uncertain. In essence, Van Dam followed Heinzelmann's revision of the conclusions of Schlick: J. Schlick, "Composition et chronologie des *De virtutibus sancti Martini* de Grègoire de Tours," *Texte und Untersuchungen* 92 (1966), 278–286; Martin Heinzelmann, "Une source de base de la littérature hagiographique latine: le recueil de miracles," in *Hagiographie cultures et sociétés ive-xiie siècles. Actes du Colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris* (Paris, 1981), 235–259.

8   Van Dam, *GC*, xii.

TABLE 4.1   *Comparison of the three main schemas proposed for the composition of the* Miracula

	Monod	Krusch	Van Dam
VM 1	574–575	573–576	573–576
VM 2	577–581	581	580–581
VM 3	582–587	587	By July 588
VM 4	591–594	Begun after 592 but unfinished at death (594)	
VJ	582–586	581–587 (*VJ* 50 added later: 590–592)	Early 580s
GM	586–587	c. 590 (also 595? × 591)	By 588
GC	587–588 (Prologue 594)	587 (with some chapters added later, e.g. *GC* 60 in 590 and *GC* 24 after 591)	587–588
VP	Individually written but brought together in 594		

bringing them up-to-date, incorporating cross-references and so on."[9] Danuta Shanzer presented the same conclusion almost as a premise, emphasizing elements of apparent confusion within the works and describing the *Miracula* as "'process' rather than 'product.'"[10] The question that must be faced, however, is whether comprehensive analysis of the dating and character of the *Miracula* can sustain both these kinds of observations and fixed schemes of composition, as these are presented in the literature. And if not, why not? These issues, as we shall see, help us get to the heart of how we understand Gregory as an author.

4.1.2   *The 'Two Versions' Thesis*

At this point it is necessary to emphasize the difference between two apparently similar, but quite distinct visions of Gregory's way of writing: in the first, which might be termed the 'two versions' theory, Gregory wrote one version of his texts during a certain period and then came back to produce revised and updated versions (in the early 590s); in the second, Gregory simply never

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9   James, *VP*, xii.

10   Danuta Shanzer, "So Many Saints – So Little Time ... the *Libri Miraculorum* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 13 (2003), 19–60, at 24. Her presentation is complicated by her view that significant sections of the *Miracula* texts were inserted posthumously.

finished writing – he was continually composing the texts. Some of the language scholars have used appears to blend the two in a way that is not entirely consistent.[11] There are, however, significantly different implications for dating the texts depending on which of the two visions is correct: whether Gregory completed the *Miracula* books before later coming back, separately, to 'revise' them, or whether he simply wrote them over a long period of time, in which case to speak of 'revising' seems something of a misnomer. If the former – the 'two versions' thesis – is true then the date of the first version of the *Miracula* texts and of their second edition may well both be reconstructable; but if the latter is correct, then, no matter what 'dating' evidence there appears to be in the works, only the evidence of when Gregory finished is meaningful.

In reality, as will become clear from the consideration of the chronology and composition of the *Miracula* books in this chapter, only the second option is sustainable. Several of the *Miracula* texts are evidently unfinished and the combined, contradictory, cross-references within the corpus as a whole show that even those works which appear closest to completion can never have been finalized or published. Moreover, it will be shown that internal 'dating' evidence in the *Miracula* texts will not bear the weight placed on it: Gregory's methods of writing and his shifting conception of his works mean that the individual, apparently datable, sections in the books which are often used as 'proof texts', as it were, for dating the work as a whole, lose their relevance. In short, the date of individual works derived from evidence within them cannot be maintained in the face of the seemingly contradictory evidence for the chronology of Gregory's composition of the *Miracula*.[12] Gregory's hagiographic works were neither coherent nor complete, as they are often treated; rather, they were left, with one exception, unfinished and 'unpublished' at the time of Gregory's death.[13]

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11   Van Dam, for instance speaks, as noted above, of Gregory "constantly revising his writings over the years" (Van Dam, *GM*, xii), and yet also argues for a specific dating for the completion of, for example, the *GM*, followed by a later period when he revised and added to the book. This attitude is not entirely absent even from Shanzer's more consistent picture of the works' state of incompletion: for instance, Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 24 and n. 35.

12   Obviously, this is not to say that either Gregory or his works were confused, but simply that, being unfinished, the internal 'dating' evidence is confusing to us: Gregory was not writing with one eye on what later scholars might make of the chronology of his works.

13   'Publishing' is a difficult, and, in important ways, patently anachronistic, term when speaking about literary culture at the end of the 6th century. Nonetheless, it is a useful one when used, as here and throughout, to refer to decisions by authors to allow the copying and distribution of a work they have written. There is no real evidence for assuming that medieval authors never considered their works 'finished,' but rather always open for editing. Manuscript transmission of texts rarely points to the dissemination of different

Nonetheless, Gregory's final vision for the organization of the works and their inter-relationship is retrievable, even if this probably only emerged over time and might have changed again had he lived longer. At his death it was apparently Gregory's intent, once he had finished the *Miracula*, to issue them all together, as a set, following the order in which the works are set out in the *GC* prologue and which is also that found in the main manuscript tradition.[14] It is only in the light of this plan for joint publication that the otherwise seemingly contradictory cross-references in the *Miracula* make sense.

Before considering the way Gregory's hagiographic corpus follows the above pattern, it is necessary to discuss those works which are an exception to it: *VM* 1–3.

4.2 *The Miracles of the Bishop Saint Martin:* **The Exception to the Rule**

4.2.1 VM *1–3*

The *VM* is in four books. It is generally assumed that they were not published together, but rather released as they were completed.[15] *VM* 1 has usually been dated between 573/4 and 576. This is because *VM* 1, Prologue, makes clear that the work was written after Gregory became bishop, and because Venantius Fortunatus, in a letter to Gregory, apparently accompanying a copy of the former's work, *Vita Martini*,[16] seems to refer to *VM* 1.[17]

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authorial redactions of works, at varying stages of development. This is as true for Gregory's works as for others.' Gregory probably died before he could put the finishing touches on to his *Histories* and 'publish' them; but his own last words show that once it had been finished Gregory would have been ready to consider the work complete and not open to revision. On this topic see P. Meyvaert, "Medieval Notions of Publication: the 'Unpublished' *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum* and the Council of Frankfort (794)," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 12 (2002), 78–89.

14   For the latter reason, this was also the order in which Krusch placed the works in his edition. This sequence is slightly different from the organization of the works implied in *Hist.* 10.31.

15   Since, as will be seen, *VM* 4 is incomplete, this model can only apply to *VM* 1–3.

16   Fortunatus' *Vita Martini* can be given a fairly convincing *terminus ante quem* since, near the end, the work mentions that the reigning bishop of Paris was Germanus, who died in 576. Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini*, 4.637: "modo Germanus regit." *Venance Fortunat, Oeuvres Tome IV: Vie de Saint Martin*, (ed). and trans. Solange Quesnel (Paris, 1996), 98, line 637. In the letter to Gregory, Fortunatus also claimed that he had completed the work in six months: *Epistola ad Gregorium* 3 (*Fortunat, Vie de Saint Martin*, (ed.) Quesnel, 3), which would make it difficult to argue that such a reference to Germanus had simply been left over from an older, draft version.

17   The key quote is: "When you decide that that work, in which, with the aid of Christ and the intercessions of the lord Martin, you have set out his miracles, ought to be turned into

Although generally accepted, there is good reason to treat this conclusion with caution. One piece of evidence directly contradicts it. Gregory refers to Fortunatus' *Vita Martini* in *VM* 1.2: "The priest Fortunatus also rewrote in verse the complete account of [Martin's] life in four books."[18] Some have speculated that Gregory added the comment later, or in an updated edition.[19] As will be seen later, however, there is no evidence that Gregory prepared several, revised, editions of any of his works.[20] Only one version of *VM* 1 survives; postulating earlier and later versions unnecessarily multiplies entities.

Furthermore, there are strong grounds for concluding that Gregory did not produce two editions of *VM* 1 – one completed earlier, followed later by a revised redaction. Quite the opposite: Gregory was careful to protect the integrity of the *VM* 1 once the work was completed. In *VM* 2.2 he cited a miracle that, technically, dated to the time period covered by *VM* 1, but noted that: "I have decided that it is also appropriate not to omit this event that escaped me in the previous book."[21] If *VM* 1 was revised post-576 and additions were made, then there would have been no need to add this story, with apology, to *VM* 2.

This means, therefore, that the original paradox remains: Gregory's work refers to Fortunatus' *uita*, and Fortunatus' letter refers to Gregory's text. This is the first of many circles in Gregory's *Miracula*, where mutual inter-dependencies undermine initial confidence about dating. Fortunately, this inconsistency is more easily resolved than others. It is more apparent than real. Although, as shown above, the *VM* 1 reference to Fortunatus' *Vita Martini* was probably original, meaning the former postdates the latter, the letter to Gregory is not inconsistent with this. Fortunatus' epistle includes a dedication to Saint Martin, sent to Gregory as the saint's representative, but it is not the work's real preface: that is in verse and was written for Agnes and Radegund.[22] Nor is Fortunatus'

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verse, then simply order that it be sent to me." ("cum iusseritis ut opus illud, Christo praestante, intercessionibus domni martini, quod de suis uirtutibus explicuistis, uersibus debeat digeri, id agite ut mihi ipsum relatum iubeatis transmitti." *Epistola ad Gregorium* 2.).

18   "Sed et Fortunatus presbiter omne opus vitae eius in quattuor libris versu conscripsit."

19   For instance, Quesnel: "Mais rien ne permet d'affirmer qu'il n'a pas rajouté cette mention dans une édition ultérieure" (*Vie de Saint Martin*, 106, n. 12).

20   Even at this stage it is self-evident that if such a phrase is accepted as an addition then, in the absence of significant alternative textual traditions (and there are no manuscript witnesses pointing to a tradition without the comment about Fortunatus' work), there can be no clarity about what else might have been inserted or changed. Thus, it is impossible to maintain a specific or early date for the work's completion.

21   "Gratum arbitrates sum et illud non omittere, quod mihi in libro anterior excessit."

22   *Prologus ad Agnem et Radegundem de vita sancti Martini*, in *Fortunat, Vie de Saint Martin*, (ed.) Quesnel, 4–5.

reference to *VM* 1 unambiguous. Certainly, Fortunatus is aware that Gregory was working on an *opus* on Saint Martin's miracles; whether it was a complete book is far less clear. The very fact that Fortunatus did not turn *VM* 1 into verse, despite the eagerness he expressed in his letter to undertake the translation, may well be a sign that Gregory did not feel his work was ready at that stage to share, even with a friend and literary colleague.

Overall, the deduction that *VM* 1 was completed sometime between 573/4 and 576 is less conclusive than has previously been held. Indeed, there are signs that, while the book was finished before *VM* 2, Gregory did not actually publish it until he had completed the latter. In the last chapter of *VM* 2, Gregory suggested that he intended the two volumes on Martin as a coherent whole,[23] bringing together forty chapters of Saint Martin's miracles before Gregory's episcopal accession with sixty from afterwards, in order to make up a round 100.[24] Therefore, Gregory may only have finalized *VM* 1 in co-ordination with his completion of *VM* 2, when they were perhaps 'published' together.[25]

As far as the dating of *VM* 2, and indeed *VM* 3, goes, historians have long recognized that many of the miracles in the *VM* can be dated, because Gregory follows the order of the festivals of Saint Martin.[26] Dating the miracles is not the same as dating the writing of those miracles stories, or more pertinently, of completing the works. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to take the gap between the last datable miracle in *VM* 2 and the first in *VM* 3 as the probable period of

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23   *VM* 2.60. "For I always hoped not to leave unfinished the vow that at the Lord's command I have [now] completed in eight years" ("Spes enim mihi erat, me non frustrari a voto, quod in octo annis, Domino iubente, complevi"). The same vision is implicit in the prologue to *VM* 1.

24   *VM* 2.60: "these [first] two books are to be concluded with this total" ("hii duo libelli in hoc numero teneantur"). Of course, at some stage, as will be discussed later, Gregory's conception of the potential scope of the *VM*, taking the work as a whole, shifted, allowing him to produce *VM* 3 and 4.

25   Unlike the other *Miracula* books, which, as will be shown, remained unpublished at Gregory's death, *VM* 1–3 probably, and *VM* 1–2 almost certainly, were disseminated. The purpose of the *VM*, at least during the years of work on *VM* 1 and 2, is perhaps most naturally interpreted as a 'political' exercise, showing a local audience who might be willing to see Gregory as an outsider (cf. *Hist.* 5.49) that there was no truer, more loyal and proud son of Saint Martin than he. Such a public relations campaign would only really make sense if the work was 'published' and known about. More speculatively, one might argue that this gives further, implicit support to the idea that *VM* 1 was only published once *VM* 2 was completed, in 581, and therefore after the great crisis of Gregory's episcopacy. Riculf's claim that Gregory represented external interests (*Hist.* 5.49) would surely have had less resonance if *VM* 1 was already being distributed, copied and read.

26   Schlick, "Composition et chronologie" and Heinzelmann "Une source," among others.

completion and publication of *VM* 2. On such a basis the completion of *VM* 2 would fall sometime between November 580 (*VM* 2.56) and November 581 (*VM* 3.2).[27] In fact, given that there are four further chapters in *VM* 2 following the last datable miracle, including a reference in the last (*VM* 2.60) to Gregory, having already written the rest of the work, waiting for one more miracle,[28] it is possible to say, with some confidence, that *VM* 2 was finished in 581, sometime before November.[29]

The dating of *VM* 3 can be approximated using the same principles. The gap between the last datable miracle in *VM* 3 and the first in *VM* 4, points to the completion of the work sometime between 586/7 (*VM* 3.57 and 58)[30] and July 588 (*VM* 4.4).

4.2.2   *The Unfinished* VM *4*

In contrast to the well-defined *VM* 1–3, *VM* 4 shows clear signs of being unfinished, as has long been noted. Although *VM* 4 has a prologue, it has no conclusion, unlike *VM* 1–3. Nor does the book have a regular number of chapters; *VM* 1 has 40 and *VM* 2 has 60, adding up to a neat 100. *VM* 3 also has 60, matching *VM* 2; but *VM* 4 only has 47. The last two do not even have chapter headings.[31] Whereas *VM* 2 and 3 both begin and end with stories involving Gregory, *VM* 4's 'last' story is not about him. Since *VM* 4's first miracle relates to Gregory it makes sense to assume that he had intended to maintain the pattern and end with a story about himself. There is no summing up, no final prayer, and no conclusion or reference to judgment, all frequent elements at the end of Gregory's other works. Indeed, *VM* 4 simply stops, with the miracle story in question, *VM* 4.47, not even clearly complete.[32] The obvious explanation is that Gregory's efforts

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27   Max Bonnet, *Le latin de Grégoire de Tours* (Paris, 1890), 527–528, saw an early date for the works reflected in their written style and grammar, though the argument risks circularity.

28   In order, that is, to complete the set of 60 chapters he wanted the book to include: "For after I had described fifty-nine miracles in this book, and while I was still eagerly waiting for a sixtieth miracle, suddenly…" ("In quo cum quinquaginta novem virtutes discripsissem et sexagesimam adhuc adtentius praestolarem, subito…"). *VM* 2.60.

29   Given what has been said above concerning Gregory's apparent conception of *VM* 1 and 2 as joint works, this would then be the probable date for the publication of *VM* 1 as well, although it may have been finished before.

30   There is not a consensus as to which feast day in which year, 586 or 587, the miracles in *VM* 3.57 and 58 refer to; Van Dam, *VM*, 281, n. 92, sets out the options.

31   Something Krusch pointed to as a sign of the work's incomplete nature: Krusch, 649, n. 1.

32   Furthermore, as Van Dam pointed out for *VM* 4.37: "Bonnet [*Le latin de Grégoire*, 746 n. 4]… hinted that Gregory's verbal repetition here (*vultu splendidus … vultu decorus*) may

were interrupted by death, which prevented him from finishing the work.[33] Thus the 'date' of *VM* 4, in as much as it makes sense to give a date to an unfinished work, is that of Gregory's passing. In short, the only version which exists is the one he left at death. This leads neatly to consideration of the chronology of the composition of the other *Miracula* books, where, as will be seen, the conclusion is the same.

4.3   Interdependence and Dating in an Incomplete Corpus

4.3.1   *Other Unfinished Works:* GM, GC *and* VJ

On examination it quickly becomes clear that *VM* 4 is not the only *Miracula* work which is incomplete: the same is true for *GM*, *GC*, and even for the *VJ* and *VP*. The most obvious evidence for the incomplete nature of the *GM* comes at the end of the work. The penultimate chapter of the *GM*, "The woman who hoarded money,"[34] is not concerned with the power of martyrs at all; indeed, the bishop whose prayers lead to the end of the dead woman's screaming is not even named. The chapter ends uncharacteristically with a purple passage exhorting the audience to resort to the sign of the cross when facing temptation. The sign of the cross does have a relevance to martyrdom; the cross was the instrument of what might be termed 'proto-martyrdom,' Christ's crucifixion, which gave all the other martyrdoms meaning. The miracles in *GM* 105, however, are not effected by the sign of the cross. No martyr is mentioned and no martyr's *uirtus* is described. The next and final chapter, *GM* 106, does not fit the usual format of the work either: "The insolence of a fly that was turned aside by the sign of a bishop." This odd tale, although the miracle is, this time, carried out by the sign of the cross, again seems somewhat out of place. Such oddities near the end of the book – especially in a volume which, with 106 chapters, does not have the regularity that Gregory prized – are probably signs, as Shanzer argued, that Gregory had not fully completed the volume and intended further work on it.[35]

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be an indication of his failure to revise the first draft of these late chapters." Van Dam, *VM*, 300, n. 113.

33   This is also the view of Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 27.

34   *GM* 105.

35   Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 40–45. She argued, however, that the insertions of a posthumous 'corrector' played a role in leaving this work and the *GC* with their uncharacteristic numbers of chapters.

The case for incompletion is even clearer with the *GC*. Like the *GM*, the number of chapters in the *GC*, 110, is not neat and meaningful. Nor do the last two chapters, *GC* 109 and *GC* 110, sit naturally with the rest of the book.[36] More importantly, near the end, there are three chapters with headings but no content: *GC* 105, 106, 107.[37] Krusch concluded that Gregory died before he could write about the miracles of these confessors.[38] Thus, despite the presence of a closing admonition, apparently wrapping up the work, Gregory was still probably expecting to revise, refine and, indeed, complete the text before it was ready for publication.

The signs of incompletion in the *VJ* are more subtle, but the final picture is the same.[39] Gregory placed two separate chapters together (*VJ* 34, 35), with only one title shared between them.[40] With *VJ* 46a and 46b, Gregory has done the opposite, giving two different chapters the same number, 46.[41] Furthermore, *VJ* 38, *De caeco inluminato*, is actually about a blind girl.[42] Other internal oddities show that Gregory's vision of the work shifted over time.[43] In *VJ* 32, for example, Gregory says: "Now it is proper to end this book by recounting a few [stories] about those [other] places that have [Julian's] relics."[44] Given that the *VJ* has fifty chapters, such a statement implies that Gregory's plan changed as he was writing the book. Furthermore, these inconsistencies show that Gregory has not revised an earlier work. In fact, it is difficult to see how such complexities can be resolved except by accepting not only that Gregory wrote the *VJ* over an extended period, but also that he never had time to perfect the work for publication before his death.[45]

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36   *GC* 109, "The merchant who did not give alms"; *GC* 110, "Another [merchant] who diluted his wine."

37   "Bishop Tetricius"; "Saint Orientius, bishop"; and "The virgin Quiteria."

38   Krusch, 816, n. 1.

39   Much of the following evidence was summarized by Van Dam, *VJ*, 162–163, although he came to a different conclusion.

40   As noted by Krusch, 562.

41   As was, again, noted by Krusch, 563, n. 2.

42   For Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 35, "'too little time' (even possibly death itself) was the problem."

43   This issue and its implications for dating Gregory's works will be discussed in detail later.

44   *VJ* 32: "nunc pauca de locis illis, in quibus eius habentur reliquiae, disserentes, finem huius libelli facere placet, devotione commonente" (translation modified slightly).

45   Despite these inconsistencies and irregularities, the *VJ* is no early draft: the book has fifty chapters, consistent with the round numbers Gregory seems to have favored; it has a prologue, although this is cleverly integrated with the narrative in the first chapter; and it ends with a conclusion, where Gregory prayed for the saint's help and assistance on the Day of Judgment – another regular feature of Gregory's works. Taken together these elements might most naturally imply that when Gregory died the work was essentially complete but not finally revised and made ready for 'publication.'

To summarize then, internal evidence shows that *VM* 4, *GM*, *GC* and *VJ* were all apparently unfinished at Gregory's death.[46] This conclusion can be confirmed by analyzing the relationships between the texts. As will be seen, taken together, the evidence, both internal and external, reveals both that all the works apart from *VM* 1–3 were incomplete at Gregory's death, and that he had been working on them continuously and concurrently until that point.

4.3.2 *Cross-referencing in an Unfinished Canon*

Given that Gregory makes cross-references between his works, and then assuming the texts were completed and issued, the simplest, and traditional, method of attempting to date them is comparatively. If A refers to B and B refers to C then A (or at least that part of A) should be later than B and B later than C. A difficulty, however, arises when C goes on to refer to A. This is the situation facing us in the *Miracula*: the levels of interconnection and interdependence between the texts – exacerbated by the evidently incomplete nature of several of them – finally render the question of chronology all but meaningless and show that all the works were unpublished except for *VM* 1–3.

Part of the problem is the impossibility of finding a convincing fixed point as a basis of comparison. At first sight the *Histories* appears a viable candidate. Gregory refers to the texts of all the hagiographic works during the course of the *Histories*.[47] He then refers to them again, together, in *Hist.* 10.31: "I have written ten books of this *History*, seven books of *Miracles* and one on the *Life of the Fathers*."[48] This seems simple enough. Although the seven books of miracles are not itemized, they must surely be *GM*, *VJ*, *VM* 1–4, and *GC*, with the *VP* mentioned separately. Gregory's summary is helpful because it places all the works together

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46   The *VP* will be considered later, where it will be shown that this work, while closer to being complete, probably had not been fully finalized or 'published' either.

47   Treating the *VM* as one work, as Gregory himself was willing to do, for instance in *VM* 3.24: "But let me return to my friend Aredius, who was even, if I may say so, a special foster son of the blessed confessor" ("Sed revertamur ad Aridium nostrum, immo etiam peculiarem, ut ita dicam, beati confessoris alumnum"). There has been no prior mention of Aredius in *VM* 3, so this is apparently a reference to the content of *VM* 2, showing that Gregory could treat the *VM* as a single entity. Again, in *VM* 4.1 Gregory said: "I remembered that a few years previously I had been healed from this sort of stomachache by the saint's power; the written account [of that miracle] is found in the second book of this work" ("cum mihi venit in memoria, ante paucos annos sicut in libro secundo huius operis contenetur scriptum, me ab hoc dolore sancti virtute fuisse sanatum").

48   "Decem libros Historiarum, septem Miraculorum, unum de Vita Patrum scripsi." Thorpe, 602, misleadingly has "Lives of the Fathers."

at a basically identifiable moment in time – that is, 594, when Gregory was writing the last part of the *Histories*.

But given that, as has just been shown, at least four of these works were not finished or published, it is clear that the *Histories*' reference must be aspirational. The catalogue is a snapshot of what Gregory, at the time of writing *Hist.* 10.31, envisaged his final corpus would look like when he eventually published the *Histories*, something that he probably never quite had the chance to do. He is not referring in a complete and published work to several other datable, completed, and published works; he is writing in one ongoing work about several others he is writing in parallel, ready, when completed, to issue them more or less together. Death, however, intervened, leaving the works unfinished and the plan unfulfilled.

This conclusion is supported by Gregory's reference to his works on miracles in the prologue to the *GC*. This sets out the texts in a similar, though not identical, list to the catalogue in *Hist.* 10.31. In the *GC*'s prologue, Gregory talks not of having composed seven books of Miracles and one about the Life of the Fathers, but of having written eight *libelli* of miracle stories:[49]

> In a first book [*GM*] I therefore included some of the miracles of the Lord, the holy apostles, and other martyrs. These miracles had been unknown until now, [but] God deigned to increase them daily to strengthen the faith of believers. For it was surely improper that they disappear from memory. In a second book [*VJ*] I wrote about the miracles of St Julian. [I wrote] four books [*VM* 1–4] about the miracles of St Martin, and a seventh [*VP*] about the life of some blessed [saints]. I am writing this eighth book about the miracles of the confessors.[50]

This summary, despite its greater precision over the identity of the *Miracula* books, is no more helpful for dating any of them than that in the *Histories*. Even more clearly than the latter work, the *GC*'s prologue refers to the fourth book of the miracles of Saint Martin as having been written when, in fact, it was not finished; indeed, neither is the *GC*. Thus, in one unfinished work, the *GC*,

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49   This difference is important and will be discussed later in considering the way Gregory's own categorization of his corpus changed.

50   *GC* Prologue. "Igitur in primo libello inseruimus aliqua de miraculis Domini ac sanctorum apostolorum reliquorumque martyrum, quae actenus latuerunt, quae Deus ad corroborandum fidelium fidem cotidie dignatur augere; quia valde molestum erat, ut traderentur oblivioni. In secundo posuimus de virtutibus sancti Iuliani. Quattuor vero libellos de virtutibus sancti Martini. Septimum de quorundam feliciosorum vita. Octavum hunc scribimus de miraculis confessorum."

Gregory refers to other unfinished works, as if they were complete. This *GC* catalogue, therefore, like that in the *Histories*, indicates Gregory's plan for the final publication of the works, rather than being a genuine reference in a finished book to an already published volume. Again, Gregory's words are best viewed as aspirational, setting out how he intended his corpus to look at the time of publication, rather than reflecting the current state of readiness at the time of writing.

One alternative solution to this particular conundrum can be discounted immediately: that Gregory wrote the *GC*'s prologue after he had completed the rest of the work and that thus its contradictory cross-references reveal nothing about the 'real' date of the completion of the actual text. The hypothesis that a preface was written after finishing a book is not, in itself, unreasonable; but here the evidence shows that it cannot be true. First, as has already been seen, there are strong signs that the work as it stands is incomplete: so it does not make sense to say that Gregory wrote the *GC* Prologue after finishing the work. In fact, as with *VM* 4, which also, while unfinished, includes a prologue, the presence of these introductions at the start of incomplete works proves that, unlike many authors, Gregory, in these cases at least, wrote his prologue before he had 'finished' the work.[51]

Even if one were to assume that Gregory had written the *GC*'s prologue after the rest of the work, there is still no reason that it should be inconsistent with the main text, or with other works. Rather than coherence between introductions, Gregory simply offers more apparent contradiction: while the *GC*'s prologue refers to the *VP*, the *VP*'s preface mentions the *GC* not once, but twice. Incidentally, therefore, given that the *GC*'s unfinished state shows that the work

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51   This of course does not mean that Gregory began a work by composing its preface. The contradiction between the mention of four books of the *VM* in *GC* Prologue, quoted above, with that in *GC* 6, which implies that Gregory had only written three books of the *VM* by the time he wrote that chapter, would certainly suggest that the prologue was written later than that chapter. Nonetheless, with the *GC*, there is some subtle evidence that a significantly different version of the prologue underlies that which survives. In *GC* 44, Gregory states that he is deviating from the description of the work set out in the prologue – "For although I already said in the preface of this book that I would record only those events that God deigned to work after the death of his saints at their intercession, nevertheless I do not think it absurd if I recall a few events from the life of those about whom I know that nothing has been written" ("Et licet iam dixerimus in prologo libri huius, ut ea tantum scriberemus, quae Deus post obitum sanctorum suorum, eis obtenentibus, est operare dignatus, tamen non puto absurdum duci, so de illorum vita memoremus aliqua, de quibus nulla cognovimus esse conscripta"). There is, in fact, no such stipulation in the *GC* Prologue as it stands, implying that Gregory had written an earlier version of the introduction.

remained unpublished at Gregory's death, it is logical to conclude that the *VP* had not been published either. If the *VP* had been issued before the *GC*, then its reference to the *GC* would have been incomprehensible.[52]

4.3.3   *Collapsing Circles of Cross-references*

Inconsistent references between the works are not limited to the prologues, or to the summary at the end of the *Histories*, however; they are also features of the bodies of the texts. Analyzing the cross-references across Gregory's hagiographic corpus reveals them to be as apparently contradictory as the directions of travel of the soldiers on Escher's staircases. These circles, therefore, tell us not about the chronology of Gregory's works, but about his process of parallel composition and his ultimate plan for the *Miracula*. The collapsing cross-references across the canon thus extend and confirm our earlier conclusions: they point to a corpus that was being worked on concurrently, but which remained unfinished at Gregory's death.

To begin, for instance, with the *GM*. Gregory refers in *GM* 64 to having written the *VJ*:

> In the territory of Clermont the martyr Julian fought for and deservedly earned a reward for his struggle. I have publicized the great deeds he performed that have been transmitted to me in a book that I dared to write about his particular miracles.[53]

Taken at face value, this would suggest the *VJ* was completed before the *GM*. But the *VJ* is not the end of the chain of cross-references – and not only because, as has already been seen, it was apparently not quite finished at Gregory's death. Near the end of the *VJ*, Gregory refers to *VP* 8 on Saint Nicetius of Lyons: "I have [also] recorded this blind man in my book about the life of Saint Nicetius, because it is proper that a common miracle link the writings

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52   It might be argued that the *VP* was only unfinished as a collection, but that Gregory had written and published the individual books separately, earlier. This appears to be the contention of Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 47. There is, however, no evidence that they were published in any form other than as part of the *VP* collection. The manuscript tradition (Krusch, 462–464) does not seem to suggest separate transmissions for any of the individual *libri* separate from the collected *libellus*, something which would be expected if Gregory had disseminated each immediately after he is supposed to have finished them. Rather, it seems as though Gregory may have kept them back until they were ready to be collected in the *VP*.

53   *GM* 64: "In huius urbis territurio et Iulianus martyr agonis palmam legitime decertando promuerit. De cuius virtutibus quae ad nos usque venerunt in libro, quem de eius miraculis propriae scribere praesumpsimus, declaravimus."

about each saint."[54] So, if the *Miracula* books had been finished and published before Gregory's death, then, *prima facie*, it would seem that the *VJ* post-dated the *VP*.[55]

Again, the inter-dependencies do not end there: the *VP* Preface refers to both the *GM* and the *GC*:

> I had decided to write only about what has been achieved with divine help at the tombs of the blessed martyrs and confessors [i.e. *GM* and *GC*]. But I recently discovered information about those who have been raised to heaven by the merit of their blessed conduct here below, and I thought their way of life, which is known to us through reliable sources, could strengthen the Church. Since the occasion presented itself, therefore, I did not want to postpone the relation of some of these things, because the life of the saints not only makes their aims clear, but also encourages the minds of the listeners to follow their example.[56]

From the content of the *VP*'s preface it should be clear that this evidence cannot be dismissed with the claim that the introduction could have been written after the work itself. Even if one accepts for a moment that the preface was written 'later,' the reference in the *VP* Preface is not merely to the existence of the *GC* and *GM* prior to the writing of the *VP* Preface, but rather to their being logically prior to the very process of deciding to write the *VP*.[57] Gregory says he found the terms of the *GC* and *GM* too limiting and thus has written this new work.[58]

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54   *VJ* 50: "Memini huic caeco in libro vitae sancti Niceti, quia dignum est, ut communis virtus utriusque sancti scripta connectat."

55   This alone makes it difficult to sustain the suggestion of Monod, *Études critiques*, 42–44, Krusch, 452 and Van Dam, *VJ*, 62, n. 78 that the *VJ* dates to the early 580s. Even if one wanted to argue that the date of the *VP* as a whole need not constrain the dates of publication of individual books within it – a view that has been argued against above – this would not affect the case here since *VP* 8 mentioned not only the 585 Comminges campaign, but also Agiulf's visit to and return from Rome. Thus *VP* 8 cannot pre-date 591.

56   *VP* Preface: "Statueram quidem illa tantum scribere, quae ad sepulchra beatissimorum martyrum confessorumque divinitus gesta sunt, sed, quoniam quaedam de his nuper repperi quos beatae conversationis meritum evexit ad caelum, quorumque vitae tramitem certis relationibus cognitum eclesiam aedificare putavi, dicere aliqua ex illis oportunitate cogente non differ, quia sanctorum vita non modo eorum pandit propositum, verum etiam auditorium animos incitat ad profectum."

57   As will be argued in more detail later, there is no reason to place weight on Gregory's use of words like *nuper*, "recently."

58   Ironically, while the *VP*'s preface states that Gregory's intent was to expand on the accounts given in the *GM* and *GC*, which are evidently unfinished, the *VP* is apparently

In case the reference to the *GM* in the *VP* Preface is not clear enough, the latter goes on to make an even more direct reference to the *GC*, this time 'by name': "I have indeed related, more briefly, some facts about the life of some of these men in my book on the Confessors, below."[59] But it should be no surprise to discover that this mention of the *GC* does not mean that the latter work, itself unfinished, was the end of the chain. The circle continues with *GC* 104 clearly referencing the *GM*: "The blessed Radegund, whom I mentioned at the beginning of my book about martyrs, migrated from this world after completing the labors of her life."[60]

To recapitulate: the *GM* refers to the *VJ*, which refers to the *VP*, which refers to the *GM*, and to the *GC,* which itself refers to the *GM*. In other words, if cross-reference is to be equated with 'later than,' then the *GM* is later than the *VJ*, which is later than the *VP*, which is later than the *GC*, which is later than the *GM*.

The simplest explanation and the only one really which fits the facts convincingly, is the one already proposed: Gregory was working on the *Miracula* concurrently and continuously, over an extended period of time, never finally finishing or even getting a chance to review and revise the works in order to remove the inconsistencies. In such a situation, therefore, the cross-references reveal nothing about comparative dating, but simply show Gregory at work on them at the same time.

Further interdependencies and mutually supporting, or rather collapsing, circles point to the same conclusion. As seen above, the *VP* Preface referred twice to the *GC*, both times specifically describing the latter as prior intellectually and actually to the *VP* and even presenting the *VP* as a series of expansions on chapters in the *GC*. Yet at *GC* 24, "The nun Monegundis," Gregory said: "But although I have recorded many of these people in the book that I wrote about

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one of Gregory's more polished works, with each chapter having a separate prologue drawing out the moral of the 'life.'

59   *VP* Preface: "Et scripsi, fateor, in inferiore confessorum libro aliqua de quorundam vitam." The implications of this phraseology will be discussed later, as it points to Gregory's final plan for the issuing of the corpus as a whole.

60   *GC* 104: "Beata vero Radegundis, cui initium libri martyrum meminimus, post emeritus vitae labores ab hoc mundo migravit." This is a reference to *GM* 5. Another example is the last line of the *GC* Prologue, which in introducing *GC* 1, says: "Since I began the first book [i.e. *GM*] with the miracles of the Lord, I wish to provide for this book an introduction about the miracles of the holy angels" ("Et quoniam primum libellum de Domini miraculis inchoavi, velim et huic libello de sanctorum angelorum virtutibus adhibere principium"). Again, this cannot be explained away by claiming that the prologue may have been written after the rest of the work, since the reference, while in the prologue, is actually to *GC* 1.

the life of Monegundis, I am unable to be silent about what happened next."[61] This is a reference to *VP* 19, "About Monegundis, a nun."[62] At the same time, the first part of *GC* 24 details a miracle, which is also thoroughly described in *VP* 19.3. The repetition is curious and suggests that, despite the cross-reference in *GC* 24 to *VP* 19, parts of *GC* 24 may have been written before *VP* 19; or, to put it another way, Gregory was writing the works at the same time, possibly over quite a long period.

A similar oddity in Gregory's cross-references is further evidence of the concurrent writing of these two books. As a general practice if the *GC* refers to a saint from one of the chapters of the *VP*, then Gregory mentions that he has already treated of them *in libro de eius uita*, or a similar phrase. James stated it as an absolute rule: "*GC* makes references to *VP* whenever it treats of the same saints (Venantius in *GC* 15, Monegundis in *GC* 24, Senoch in *GC* 25, Brachio in *GC* 38 and Nicetius of Trier in *GC* 92)."[63] Gregory does not, however, refer to the *VP* on Nicetius (*VP* 17) in *GC* 92.[64] He does make a back reference relating to Nicetius: "Nicetius was bishop of this city, as I said above."[65] But the reference is not to the *VP*, but to the chapter immediately preceding – that is, *GC* 91, "Bishop Maximinus of Trier," which introduces Nicetius as bishop of Trier. In neither *GC* 91 nor 92 does Gregory mention that he has written a life of Nicetius, despite the fact that this was his normal practice. The likely implication is that these chapters of the *GC* were written before *VP* 17.[66] Therefore, parts of the *VP* were apparently written before parts of the *GC*, and parts of the *GC* were apparently written before parts of the *VP*. This is no doubt because, as

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61   *GC* 24: "Sed quoniam multa ex his in libro quem de eius vita conscripsimus memoravimus, quae deinceps gesta sunt tacere nequivimus."

62   Interestingly, the story Gregory claims, in *GC* 24, he is adding to the account from *VP* 19, refers to Probatus as his archdeacon. Plato had been Gregory's archdeacon until 591: *Hist.* 5.49; *VM* 4.32; and see also Van Dam, *GC*, 22, n. 30. Thus, the writing of the story in *GC* 24, if not the miracle event itself, apparently occurred after that date. This makes dating the *GC* to 587/8 (as, for example, by Van Dam, *GC*, 22, n. 30) difficult to sustain.

63   James, *VP*, xii.

64   James' mistake probably came from trusting too implicitly in Krusch's footnote: Krusch, 807, n. 1; see also Krusch, 455.

65   *GC* 92: "Nicetius autem, ut supra diximus, ipsius urbis episcopus."

66   There are other indications that *VP* 17 might be 'late' in that Gregory refers there to Aredius, implying that he was dead: "ut agebat relator ille memoratus." Given that Aredius died in 591 (*Hist.* 10.29), the implication is that the work in its 'final' form cannot have been earlier than that.

should be becoming increasingly clear, both works were being written at the same time.[67]

4.4 Composition Confounding Chronology

4.4.1 *Gregory's Order of Writing and the 'Two Versions' Thesis*
As well as pointing to concurrent authorship, other examples can be revealing about Gregory's methods of composition, showing just how complex the implications of the evidence he has left can be. In *GC* 20, for instance, "The dedication of my oratory," Gregory refers to a miracle about which he goes on to speak in more depth in *GC* 38, "The fire that often appeared from the relics of saints." In *GC* 38 Gregory points his readers to another account of the miracle he had recorded.[68] This reference is to *VP* 12, on abbot Brachio. Interestingly, Gregory made no mention of the *VP* account in *GC* 20, although, as shown above, it was his general practice in the *GC* to do so whenever he spoke of a saint about whom he had written a *VP* chapter. Plausibly, therefore, when Gregory wrote *GC* 20 he had not written *VP* 12, but had by the time he came to write *GC* 38.

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67   Overlapping cross-references affect other books. In *VJ* 23, for instance, Gregory says: "I have often mentioned the extensive devastation King Theuderic brought upon the territory of Clermont" ("Et quia saepius commemoravi, quale excidium Arvenae regioni rex Theodoricus intulerit"). If the *saepius* is meant seriously, then Gregory has left another puzzle. *VJ* 13 speaks of Theuderic's raid, but it is not otherwise mentioned prior to *VJ* 23 in the *VJ*. (*VJ* 14 tells a story that must have occurred at about the same time, but cannot be counted as a mention of devastation brought about by Theuderic.) The implication is that Gregory is talking about references in other works. But, according to the standard dating of the *Miracula*, the first two books of the *VM* are the only works that predate the *VJ*, and neither *VM* 1 nor 2 have any mention of Theuderic's raid and the resulting devastation. If one ignores the description at *Hist.* 3.12 (given that the evidence points to a late authorship for this work: Alexander Callander Murray, "Chronology and the Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1/1 [2008]: 157–196), then that leaves just a reference in *GM* 51 (Krusch, 574, n. 3, incorrectly cited *GM* 50). Thus, Gregory's use of *saepius* at *VJ* 23 perhaps suggests that by the time he wrote *VJ* 23, he had already written *GM* 51. Elsewhere in the *GM*, however, the evidence points in the other direction. *GM* 64, for instance, as quoted earlier, says: "I have publicized the great deeds he [Julian] performed that have been transmitted to me in a book that I dared to write about his particular miracles" ("De cuius virtutibus quae ad nos usque venerunt in libro, quem de eius miraculis propriae scribere praesumpsimus, declaravimus"). Neither reference, therefore, makes sense if either the *GM* or the *VJ* had been published before the other.

68   *GC* 38: "sicut in libro vita eius scripsimus."

This should not be taken, however, to imply that, as is often assumed, Gregory always wrote the chapters of his *Miracula* works in the order in which they now occur. In fact, there is definitive evidence that he did not. In *GC* 20, for instance, he says:

> For both when I wrote about the monk who was praying and when I revealed that abbot Brachio had seen the fire rise from the relics of saints, I think that this fire is a mystical one, because it enlightens but does not burn.[69]

This can only refer to the accounts in *GC* 38 and *GC* 37, "The monk whom an abbot watched while he prayed." Thus, Gregory had apparently written those chapters before *GC* 20. But before such a conclusion is stated as certain, it should be noted that *GC* 38 itself ends with the line: "The fire also appeared during the dedication of my oratory, as I related above."[70] This, in turn, can only refer to *GC* 20.[71] The only thing which is clear is that chapter order is no inevitable guide to order of composition. This further undermines the assumption that a particular chapter can provide proof for the date of the work as a whole.

A similar example may help in 'dating' the *PS*. In *GM* 29, Gregory said:

> In that city [Ephesus] are also the Seven Sleepers, concerning whom I intend, at the Lord's command, to write something in the future.[72]

He fulfilled his promise in *GM* 94, 'The Seven Sleepers at Ephesus.' But Gregory also wrote a separate *passio* of the seven sleepers of Ephesus, a translation of a Greek original, made with the help of his Syrian friend John.[73] Clearly, Gregory had not written this work by the time he wrote *GM* 29, or he would have referred to it then, rather than saying he was planning to write later about the topic.

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69   "Hunc enim ignem, vel cum de monacho orante narravi vel cum Brachionem abbatem a pignoribus sanctorum vidisse egressum ignem exposui, mistico esse puto, eo quod non exurat, sed inluminet."

70   "Sic et in dedicatione oratorii nostri apparuit, sicut supra memoravimus."

71   In the face of this contradiction Krusch (Krusch, 760, n. 2) concluded that the relevant sentence in *GC* 20 had been added. But this, of course, does not solve the wider problem: as with all similar 'solutions' to the problems Gregory poses, it merely raises the further question of what else Gregory added that did not have a cross-reference enabling us to identify it.

72   "In ea et septem dormientes habentur, de quibus aliqua, Domino iubente, in posterum narraturi sumus."

73   *PS* 12.

At the end of chapter GM 94, however, Gregory does mention the *Seven Sleepers*: "The record of their suffering, which with the assistance of a Syrian I translated into Latin, gives a fuller account."[74]

While these references do not provide a specific 'date' for the PS, taken together, they appear to demonstrate that the work was written during the period between Gregory's composition of GM 29 and 94. Moreover, although it is impossible to know how long it would have taken Gregory to translate the PS, the natural conclusion is that Gregory must have been working on the GM for a significant period if he was able to complete a substantial other work at the same time, and between writing chapters 29 and 94.[75]

The implications of this conclusion are important and go beyond simply showing Gregory's concurrent writing of his *Miracula* works. If Gregory refers in GM 29 to his plan to write in the future about a topic and then fulfills that promise in GM 94, after having written an entirely separate work in the meantime, which he refers to in the 'later' chapter, then this renders untenable the standard theory, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that Gregory wrote 'two versions' of his *Miracula* books. According to that hypothesis, the contradictions and inconsistencies in comparative cross-references between Gregory's hagiographic works can be explained by arguing that he issued a first edition (of each) in the 580s and then produced a revised redaction (of each) including new material in the early 590s. Instead, the evidence seems to point to one single version of each, but one which was written over a long period, taking in shifts in plan and themes potentially, and being undertaken at the same time as parallel projects, with several never finally finished, and none, apart from VM 1–3, published in his lifetime.[76] That the apparent evidence for the chronology of these works leaves us confused is the natural result of such a process of authorship.[77]

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74   "Quod passio eorum, quam Siro quodam interpretante in Latino transtulimus, plenius pandit."

75   Not that chapters 30–93 need have been written 'in order.'

76   One is reminded of Murray's comment on the *Histories*: "A work 'reshaped' throughout a lifetime, one would think, could hardly be interpreted as a graduated composition at all, just one that took a long time to complete, and the detection of alleged chronological phases might seem a risky point of departure for interpretation." Murray, "Chronology and Composition," 186.

77   Again, it should be emphasized that our confusion in the face of the evidence left by incomplete works should not lead us to accuse Gregory himself of being confused. He was not writing with modern concerns about the chronology of the composition of his works in mind. Moreover, further revision before finalization and publication of the works would no doubt have removed many of the oddities, which survive. There are, however, some

The better we understand Gregory's methods of composition, therefore, the stronger are the grounds for resisting the temptation to attempt to deduce individual dating for works from Gregory's sprinkling of apparent chronological references.

4.4.2 *Gregory's Methods and Sources*

The same conclusion emerges from an analysis of the way Gregory used sources in the *Miracula*. Examining Gregory's works carefully reveals that he used other sources, worked from notes that he had made, and was willing to reuse material he had originally composed for other purposes.[78] Taken together this seriously undermines the reliability of any particular 'dating' proof-text.

Much of Gregory's information probably reached him orally, but even so there is no reason to think that when he came to write up what he had heard into *Miracula* books he did so purely from memory. The standard form of so many of the chapters in both the GC and GM suggests that the material for individual entries was already set out in a quasi-systematic way prior to its

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signs – from internal cross-references within even just the *Histories* – Gregory himself occasionally may have forgotten what content was in which work – unsurprisingly given the scale of his total corpus. In *Hist.* 4.5, for example, Gregory said: "When the time finally came for Saint Quintianus to die, Saint Gall replaced him on his episcopal throne, with the full approval of the king, as I have already said" ("Denique cum beatus Quintianus, sicut supra diximus, ab hoc mundo migratus est, sanctus Gallus in eius cathedram, rege opitulante, substitutus est"). In doing so, Gregory is using the type of phrasing ("sicut supra diximus") he normally only deploys for information found elsewhere in the *Histories*, whereas, in fact, this is a reference to content found in *VP* 6. Other examples of the same 'mistake' include a further reference in *Hist.* 4.5, this time to *GM* 50 and, more clearly, in *Hist.* 4.16, to *VP* 7. The following is a catalogue of Gregory's internal cross-references with their locations in the *Histories* demonstrating his normal usage: "sicut supra scripsimus" (4.13); "cui supra meminimus" (4.15); "ut diximus" and "quod supra diximus" (4.16); "cui supra meminimus" (4.28); "ut diximus" (4.35); "ut in superiore libro iam diximus" (5.19); "supra meminimus" (5.40); "quos superius mortuos scripsimus" (5.50); "cum supradictis thesauris" and "Gundulfum superius dictum" (6.26); "sicut iam superius memoratum est" (6.43); "cum thesauris supra scriptis" (7.9); "cui in libro superiore meminimus" (7.10); "sicut iam superius indecatum est" (7.19); "cui supra meminimus" (8.2); "pro causa, qua superius diximus" (8.18); "ut saepius diximus" (8.28); "cui in alio libro meminimus" (8.34); "quem pro crimine maiestates superius vinctum diximus" (9.13); "supra memoravimus" (9.14); "quae saepius ab ipsis dicta iam scripsimus" and "libris superioribus demonstravimus" (9.15); "superius diximus" (9.19); "sicut in superiorem librum memoravimus" (9.33); "cui in superiore libro meminimus" (9.35); "ut in superioribus libris exposuimus" (10.12).

78 Moreover, as Shanzer pointed out, Gregory, "had access to previous bishops' archives": Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 27.

inclusion in the *Miracula* books. At one point Gregory even gives an account of his practice in taking notes on Saint Martin's miracles at Tours:

> Whenever a rumor arises that the power of the blessed bishop has appeared, I summon the custodians of the shrine and learn what has happened; but I do not always learn the [individual] names from these custodians. But often I do record by name those people whom I was able to see or with whom I talked.[79]

Gregory is stating that he records in writing whatever basic information he can obtain. He is not saying that he is producing the relevant chapter of the *VM* precisely in parallel with the miracles as they occur. The extent to which individual 'notes' might be more or less developed is likely to have varied: some would probably have been simple facts – name, saint, miracle – acting primarily as *aides memoire* and ready to be drawn on and written up later. Others will have received more sustained treatment at the time. In those cases less 'revision' would have been required when Gregory came to turn his notes into a book of miracles. Wherever on this spectrum such notes lay, some are likely to have included material which apparently 'dated' them and which was retained when the notes were used as the basis for the fuller, more developed, accounts which survive. In this way, 'dating' references in the extant texts are as likely to reflect the date of the notes as the date of 'writing' the 'final' book.

The same is true of Gregory's other originally oral sources. Reading the *Miracula*, it is difficult not to conclude that Gregory took notes, or had notes taken, when he heard the stories of miracles recounted by those like Aredius. It is just as difficult not to believe that some elements of these stories, written or oral, including matter relating to dating, would have been transferred to the 'final' version of the work.[80]

At times, the material Gregory used to compose his hagiography was more developed than mere notes. Sometimes, for instance, the *Miracula* books

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79   *VM* 3.45. "Cumque rumor surrexerit, beati antestitis apparuisse virtutem, vocatis ad nos cus-
       todibus aedis, quae sunt acta cognoscimus; nomina tamen non semper ab his discimus.
       Illos vero plerumque nominatim scribimus, quos videre potuerimus, aut ipsi discutimus."

80   Van Dam argued that something similar happened in *GC* 94: "perhaps Gregory here
       included in his *GC* some notes he had made earlier, but without adequately revising them"
       (Van Dam, *GC*, 72, n. 106). Importantly, Van Dam is here, understandably, accepting the
       principle that the extant versions of the *Miracula* – the only ones there is direct evidence
       ever existed – include material which implies a certain dating but which cannot be used
       to date the work as a whole.

appear to draw on content Gregory had used previously. One example, as Van Dam pointed out, is *GC* 108, on "St Paulinus, bishop," where it looks as though Gregory copied his text from a homily he had given earlier.[81] If this is correct, then it must be presumed that most of the content of *GC* 108 pre-existed the 'work' itself. Nor is this likely to be an isolated incident.[82] Other chapters probably include material copied from its original contexts and deployed within the *Miracula*, but with the seams more carefully hidden. For the purposes of the current investigation, this conclusion is crucial. If it is not possible to be certain which parts of the content of the hagiography are independent and which are merely copied from earlier works, then no faith can be placed in apparent evidence for dating found in Gregory's *Miracula*.

The same conclusion can be drawn from Gregory's use of sources more generally. In some instances he explains what he is doing: for instance, when he uses Paulinus' account of the miracles of Felix in *GM* 103,[83] or when he quotes from Prudentius in *GM* 40, or from Fortunatus in *GM* 41. But Gregory could be much more subtle in his use of pre-existing material. *GM* 104, "Vincentius of Agen," mentions that there was a local *passio* of the martyr, which Gregory had clearly read. The same is true in several other cases.[84] In none of them is Gregory clear which parts, if any, of his own account are based on the earlier Life. The probability cannot be insignificant that some content, potentially including dating references, was transferred from the 'source' to Gregory's text.

A better understanding of Gregory's process of composition, therefore, further complicates the question of the hagiography's chronology. Overall, one thing is certain: basing conclusions about the dating of an entire individual work on even apparently clear allusions is not sound.

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81   Van Dam, *GC*, xviii. The idea that Gregory's hagiography included homilies he had preached earlier goes back to Bonnet, *Le latin de Grégoire*, 10, n. 1. Van Dam also argued that chapters from the *GM* "may have been used during the celebration of martyr saints' festivals," suggesting that *GM* 40, 46 and 103 were good candidates for such *lectiones*: Van Dam, *GC*, xviii; and Van Dam, *GM*, xxi.

82   Shanzer came to the same conclusion as Van Dam, although the chapters she felt might have depended on earlier homilies differed: *GM* 69, 74 and 84; *GC* 96 and 110; *VM* 1.31; and *VJ* 36. Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 47–48. The very variety in the possible chapters which re-used earlier material provides further support for the case being made here.

83   Gregory credited them to Paulinus of Nola, although, in reality, they were written by Paulinus of Périgueux.

84   Van Dam, *GC*, xiii, listed some other chapters where Gregory referred to *uitae* of the saints he was discussing in his text, including: *GC* 2, 22, 26, 35, 44, 45, 57, 70, 76, 87, 93, 94, and 108.

4.4.3   *Gregory's Language*

Nor are all apparent allusions to date in the *Miracula* as clear on closer examination as they at first seem, especially when the 'dating' reference is actually a temporal adverb such as *nuper* or *dudum*, "recently." The import of such terms is already affected by the possibility that, as Van Dam felt was the case in *GC* 94, they have simply been transferred over from unrevised notes,[85] or even from the original oral accounts. But even if it were possible to be sure that these terms were not from earlier sources or notes, it still would not be safe to use them to provide precise dating for the *Miracula*. In the work of a consummate storyteller like Gregory such vocabulary is no more trustworthy than phrases such as "the other day" used today in an aged relative's anecdote referring to events of decades ago.

Moreover, there is an inherent relativity about such terms even if taken seriously.[86] In *VM* 3.1, for instance, Gregory states: "As the first miracle in this book I will include something that I recently (*nuper*) experienced."[87] Even if *nuper* is intended to be taken seriously as a reference to a 'short' period of time previously, which is far from certain, then the question of what it is "recent" to remains. "Recently" from writing this first miracle in the book?[88] "Recently" from collecting them all together? "Recently" from revising the work at the end? "Recently" from finalizing and publishing? In the face of such ambiguity, it is best to avoid relying on such terms altogether in considering the dating of the surviving texts, especially when they may have been carried over from Gregory's sources or notes.

Examination of Gregory's methods of composition and use of sources has, therefore, undermined yet further any remaining faith that individual dating 'proof texts' might be used as reliable indicators for the time of completion of a *Miracula* book. 'Dating' on positive grounds, however tempting, cannot be accepted: the evidence cannot be relied upon to give conclusions solid enough to be even worth considering. His methods have defeated us again and we are left solely with the versions that he bequeathed at death.[89]

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85   Van Dam, *GC*, 72, n. 106.

86   As Murray pointed out for the *Histories:* "The relativity, and therefore ambiguity, of temporal modifiers such as *praesens* are common in writing about the past, and their incidental use is a shaky foundation for constructing a theory of composition." Murray, "Chronology and Composition," 168.

87   *VM* 3.1: "Quid autem nuper pertulerim, primum inseram huic libello miraculum."

88   Not that it is safe to assume that being the first story in the book meant it was the first to be written.

89   Perhaps one should also consider the possibility, proposed for the *Histories* by Adriaan Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul: the Histories of*

4.5 Gregory's Shifting Conception of the Miracula

In this context, one more aspect of the nature of Gregory's methods of composition needs consideration: Gregory shows signs that he changed his plan of writing. In other words, the versions of Gregory's works that survive – their structure, scope and content – do not necessarily reflect his initial plan, but merely the latest version of his vision for them before he died. In terms of the present purposes, this means that one can never be sure that any particular piece of 'dating' evidence was originally intended to be included in the work as it was finally conceived.

4.5.1 VM

The *VM* is perhaps the most obvious example of the way Gregory's vision of a work he was writing changed over time. As discussed above, the last chapter of Book 2 (*VM* 2.60) speaks of the work – or rather Gregory's vow to write the work[90] – as complete.[91] Later in *VM* 2.60, however, Gregory said:

> There are also many other miracles that the blessed man performs every day, but that it is tedious to list. If nevertheless I am still worthy to witness [more] miracles, it is appropriate to include them in another book.[92]

This is intriguing. Gregory first shows that he saw *VM* 1 and 2 as part of the same work, that was now completed; then he reveals that he is thinking of changing the scope of his work on Saint Martin and adding *alter libellus*. Gregory, of

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Gregory of Tours Interpreted in their Historical Context (Göttingen, 1994), 63–69, and more recently for the hagiography by Shanzer, "So Many Saints," that the extant versions reflect texts which had been revised for publication after Gregory's death. Certainly, if, as argued here, these works were unpublished at Gregory's death, then they were published by someone else, opening up the possibility for such tinkering. There is no space to discuss the question in detail here, but one might simply note that all the contradictions and complications noted above mean that if a 'corrector' did revise Gregory's surviving drafts to produce the versions extant today, they did not do a very good job. Until there is stronger evidence for interpolation and edition after death it is best to treat what survives as Gregory's work as he left it.

90   A reference back to the prologue of *VM* 1.

91   "For I always hoped not to leave unfinished the vow that at the Lord's command I have [now] completed in eight years" ("Spes enim mihi erat, me non frustrari a voto, quod in octo annis, Domino iubente, complevi").

92   "Multa quidem sunt et alia, quae vir beatus cotidie operatur, quae insequi longum est. Tamen, si adhuc meremur videre miracula, placet ea alteri coniungi libello."

course, went on to execute this new plan, as *VM* 3 and the unfinished *VM* 4 demonstrate. Gregory's revised conception dramatically altered the balance of the *VM*, taken as a whole, and meant, finally, he had created a work that was completely different to his initial vision.[93]

The ultimate scope of the work only emerged over time, however. Gregory speaks cautiously about adding an extra volume in the above quotation from *VM* 2.60; but by the end of *VM* 3, he has become clear that he intends to continue recording miracles as long as Saint Martin continues performing them:

> Let these stories that have been included be enough for this book. But if I am still worthy to see [more] miracles, it is proper for them to be included in another book, so that the miracles that are revealed ought rather to be publicized, not concealed.[94]

Thus, the nature of the project has shifted both significantly and gradually. When Gregory began writing the miracles of Martin, he could not have predicted how his work on the saint would evolve.[95] By the end of his life the neat original plan had altered considerably, first to three books and then to a fourth, becoming almost a running chronicle of the saint's miracles under Gregory's episcopate.

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93   In fact, one should not dismiss the possibility that the idea of *VM* 1 as an entirely independent and self-standing work preceded the two volume plan attested to by *VM* 1 Prologue and *VM* 2.60, both of which may well have been written 'later' than the basic content of *VM* 1. The last chapter in that book, *VM* 1.40, ends naturally enough without a connecting reference to a second volume necessary to complete the work: "But I have desired, to the extent that I have been able to do research, to record [these miracles] faithfully, and I have hoped to receive this payment as a reward, that forgiveness might perhaps be given me on behalf of my sins when these stories are read in praise of the most holy bishop. As the poet said: 'Perhaps it will also be a pleasure to have remembered these events'" ("Tamen nos, quantum investigare potuimus, scribere fideliter studuimus, hanc sperantes mercedis retributionem accipere, ut, dum, haec leguntur in laude sanctissimi sacerdotis, nobis fortassis tribuatur refrigerium pro delictis, dicente poeta"). If a *VM* only made up of a single book might, indeed, have been Gregory's original plan then this is further evidence of the way his conception of his works shifted.

94   *VM* 3.60: "Sufficient ergo haec huic libello, quae indita sunt. Tamen, so adhuc miracula cernere meremur, placet ea alteri libello inseri, ut ea quae ostenduntur non oculi, sed magis debeant populari."

95   Schlick, "Composition et chronologie," 280, claimed that *VM* 1–4 maintain the same thought throughout. This may be true in the restricted sense of the praise of Martin and his miracles, but it is inaccurate in speaking about Gregory's conception of the nature of the work and the balance between its primary themes.

This is an important point to consider when thinking about Gregory's corpus as a whole. It raises questions about how clear and early Gregory's conception of his plan of work for his hagiography was. With Gregory it is not safe to take the 'final' form as reflective of its initial conception. Van Dam's view, that Gregory "imagined all his writings within a unified vision,"[96] may well be accurate for the way in which Gregory attempted to organize and inter-relate his corpus immediately prior to death, but cannot be assumed to reflect an original overarching intent and plan of work envisaged from the beginning. It is not simply that there is no evidence for this early design; the *VM* gives definitive evidence that Gregory's own conception of his work could in fact alter. Importantly, the same is true for many of the other *Miracula* works.

4.5.2 GM *and* GC

While the description in the prologue to the GC of the content of the GM is fairly accurate,[97] the *VP*'s preface gives a rather different picture of what those two works included, calling them: "what has been achieved with divine help at the tombs of the blessed martyrs and confessors."[98] In fact, of course, many of the chapters in the GC and GM do not take place at the tombs of the saints. The first few chapters of both show that clearly enough.[99] The description in the *VP* Preface, thus seems to reflect a stage in the conception of the other two *Miracula* books which is not consistent with their 'final' form. Gregory's vision of what his works were about changed.[100]

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96 Van Dam, *VM*, 147.

97 GC Prologue: "some of the miracles of the Lord, the holy apostles, and the other martyrs" ("aliqua de miraculis Domini ac sanctorum apostolorum reliquorumque martyrum").

98 *VP* Preface: "quae ad sepulchra beatissimorum martyrum confessorumque divinitus gesta sunt."

99 GM 1: "The birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem," GM 2: "The miracles of our Lord and Saviour"; GM 3: "His suffering, resurrection and ascension"; GM 4: "The apostles and the blessed Mary"; GM 5: "His cross and his miracles at Poitiers." GC 1: "The miracles of angels"; GC 2 "St Hilary, bishop of Poitiers," which mentions the miracle-working power of Hilary's tomb, but goes on to tell the story of the calming of a storm on a lake through the construction of a church housing relics of Saint Hilary; GC 3: "St Eusebius Bishop of Vercelli," which begins with miracles in the church within which his tomb lay, but then relates a miracle elsewhere brought about by relics of the saint. Further instances make the point even clearer: GC 6, "The stone on which the saint [Martin] sat"; GC 7, "The tree that was raised up"; GC 76, "The statue of Berecynthia"; GC 77, "The bishop upon whose breast a lamb appeared"; etc.

100 The same conclusion emerges from the evidence adduced earlier for a superseded draft of the GC's prologue, with GC 44 referring to a stipulation in the prologue about the limitations of the work which is not present in the surviving GC Prologue.

The question of categorization goes deeper though. Several stories in the GC and GM do not even relate to 'confessors,' or 'martyrs,' respectively.[101] Nor is this simply the case for those tales at the end of each book that were discussed earlier:[102] the content of many chapters more integrated into the body of both works are at best loosely connected to each volume's broader theme. For instance, most of the chapter headings in the GM take the form, 'The relics of X,' or 'The miracles of Y,' or simply, 'The martyr Z,' or even just the name of the saint. There is, however, a whole series in the middle of the book with quite a different form and little credible claim to relate to *gloria martyrum*:

> GM 79:[103] "The wickedness of a heretic";
> GM 80: "The argument between a Catholic deacon and a heretical priest";
> GM 81: "The cleric who was tortured for confessing the Lord";[104]
> GM 82: "The power of the relics that were brought to me from Rome";
> GM 83: "The relics my father owned";
> GM 84: "The man who washed his feet in a paten belonging to a church";[105]
> GM 85: "The deacon whose hands a tower-shaped vessel avoided";
> GM 86: "The priest who drank [wine] during a vigil on Christmas Eve";
> GM 87:[106] "The adulterous woman at the Jordan river."[107]

The inclusion in the GM of such stories, some concerning confessors rather than martyrs, is no afterthought. They are in the heart of the work which shows they are not in the GM by accident, and implies that Gregory's 'plan' for the

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101   Van Dam rightly made the point that Gregory never defined what he meant by confessors in the GC: Van Dam, GC, xvii–xviii. Indeed, Gregory seems to have struggled to find consistent titles for most of his *Miracula* books: GM Prologue does not even name the work.

102   GM 105, "The woman who hoarded money," and GM 106, "The insolence of a fly that was turned aside by the sign of a bishop"; GC 109, "The merchant who did not give alms," and GC 110, "Another [merchant] who diluted his wine."

103   Even GM 78, "The cathedral at Agde," while mentioning the martyr Saint Andrew, focuses instead on the power and prayers of Bishop Leo.

104   Although the cleric was tortured, he was not martyred; rather, he "happily left and returned to Gaul" ("laetus discedens, in Galliis est regressus").

105   This chapter does not even concern a confessor, but sacred vessels.

106   Van Dam pointed out (Van Dam, GM, 83, n. 100): "This story seems out of place, since Gregory had included other stories about the Jordan river and Jericho much earlier [GM 16–20]."

107   There are other examples in the text: as Van Dam, GM, xx, pointed out, GM 12, 24–25, like 79–80, "never mentioned martyrs or martyrdom but … did refute Arianism, …not by logical arguments but by the power of relics [GM 12, 24–25] or by direct trials of strength [GM 79–80]."

work was not firm and constant from the first moment he began collecting material to the last second he laid down his pen.

There are similar examples in the *GC* pointing to the same conclusion: for instance, *GC* 63, "The woman who picked up the sandals of the martyr Epipodius," is about the power of the relic of a martyr, not a confessor.[108] The probable reason for this miracle's placement here, rather than, as would apparently have been more appropriate, in the *GM*, is instructive. The miracle is one of a set that took place in Lyons.[109] The *GC* as a whole tends to move about by geography,[110] providing a tour of the wonder-working sites of Gaul,[111] with a few tangential chapters about miracles in foreign lands. Some places are, however, repeated: Bourges and Paris, for instance.[112] Such irregularities again suggest that Gregory's plan of work changed during the period of the text's composition.[113]

Gregory's vision of these works was, therefore, flexible, even to the extent of including in one book matter apparently more fitting for the companion volume. To a significant extent these inconsistencies in content leave the reader with the impression that Gregory, finding an enjoyable or uplifting story with a good moral, makes sure he fits it in somewhere in his corpus. Thus, one cannot

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108   Furthermore, neither *GC* 13, "The heretic who wished to restore a man's sight," nor *GC* 14: "The argument of a heretic with a Catholic," include clearly defined or named confessors. In *GC* 64, "Another woman whose husband appeared on behalf of an offering," there is no mention of a confessor, anonymous or not.

109   *GC* 60–64.

110   That this was Gregory's intent – at least at one stage – is confirmed, for example, by the ending of *GC* 25: "so much concerning Tours" ("Hactenus de Turonicis").

111   From this 'tour' characteristic it seems likely that the monastery in *GC* 37 is not in an unknown location as Van Dam (Van Dam, *GC*, 30, n. 42) and Vieillard-Troiekouroff (M. Vieillard-Troiekouroff, *Les monuments religieux de la Gaule d'après les oeuvres de Grégoire de Tours* (Paris, 1976), 427), thought: but rather in Clermont.

112   Bourges is featured in *GC* 79–81, with another story at *GC* 90 and one more at 100; Paris is the location for *GC* 87–89 and also *GC* 103.

113   Similar breaks in the thematic organization are evident in the *GM*. For instance, the group of miracles, *GM* 79–87, mentioned above, seems out of place. They are not easily dismissible as a batch from a single source: several do relate to Visigothic territory, but not all of them. Other chapters or groups of chapters raise similar questions. As Van Dam, *GM*, xiii–xiv, pointed out: "Near the end of the book Gregory included another series of stories about foreign martyrs and their shrines in Spain, Italy, North Africa, and regions in the eastern empire. These stories seem to have represented either a digression or an afterthought, since Gregory eventually decided to 'return to the martyrs of Gaul' [*GM* 103]." It is worth emphasis that such examples, in both works, also contradict, once more, the 'two versions' thesis of Gregory's method of composition.

be certain what Gregory's 'original' intention was or where he initially planned to 'put' a story when he first heard it, or even when he first began writing it up. Gregory was quite possibly writing chapters without having fully resolved their precise final location. There is no justification for teleological assumptions about the original intention of Gregory's works based on their final form. At what stage of collection Gregory decided that the theme would be martyrs, or confessors, or fathers is unclear; but one should not assume, simply because the works currently have those 'titles,' that Gregory originally collected the material with those divisions in mind. At different stages of composition, Gregory probably envisaged different distributions of material between the works than that found in their 'final' versions. This, thus, undermines the usefulness of the dating evidence of any particular chapter, since one cannot be confident that when he was writing a particular section Gregory knew precisely where, or even in which book, it would ultimately be placed. As a result, it is simply not possible to extrapolate from a story with an apparent chronological reference to the dating of the entire work.

4.5.3   VP

The same lesson emerges from consideration of the rather different ways in which Gregory's conception of the *VP* changed over time.[114] Although the *VP* Preface is apparently so clear not only about Gregory's intent in writing, but even about the process by which he came to decide to write the book, other evidence suggests that his view of the work did not always remain unified or constant.[115] When content from the *VP* is cited in the *Histories*, for instance,[116]

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114   Gregory's plan for the *VJ* also seems to have changed over the course of writing the work; for instance, as noted earlier, in *VJ* 32, Gregory says: "Now it is proper to end this book by recounting a few [stories] about those [other] places that have [Julian's] relics" ("nunc pauca de locis illis, in quibus eius habentur reliquiae, disserentes, finem huius libelli facere placet, devotione commonente"; translation slightly modified). The *VJ*, however, goes on for another 18 chapters. *VJ* 32 is not the beginning of the end; it is scarcely the end of the beginning. One possible implication of this is discussed in the Appendix.

115   Worth mentioning also are the varied titles Gregory gives the work: in its own preface he first seems to be saying that the work should be called "vita patrum," but a few lines later he expressed a different intention: "vita sanctorum vocitare voluimus." In *GC* Prologue the *VP* is described as his seventh book, "de quorundam feliciosorum vita." This use of different titles for the *VP* contributes to the impression that Gregory was never quite sure how to classify the work.

116   In the *Histories*, Gregory had standard ways of referring to content from all the different *Miracula* books: material from the *GC* and *GM* is treated as if it came from a single *Liber Miraculorum*, while content from the *VM* and *VJ* is generally cited as being found in

Gregory speaks of having written about the saint or miracle "in the book of his life," or a similar phrase.[117] Gregory uses precisely the same sorts of phrases in the main text of the *GC* and the *VJ* when they cross-reference the *VP*.[118] Therefore, Gregory is apparently able, at the end of his life, as he writes the *Histories*, to conceive of the individual chapters of the *VP* as several separate books. Nonetheless, despite all of these cross-references to the *VP* by its individual chapters, in both *Hist.* 10.31 and *GC* Prologue, Gregory was happy to speak of the *VP* as a single work. Even at death, it seems Gregory had still not finally decided exactly how to group and classify the *VP*.

Overall, it is possible to conclude that the difficulty of using apparently datable material in the *Miracula* for dating the individual works is not simply about the presence of earlier material. It is also about the question of Gregory's conception of these works and how this shifted over time. Gregory collected his material without a clear and constant view about how he would use it.[119] In other words, it is not possible to speak of, for example, the '*GM*,' or the '*GC*,' at early stages in the composition process. The works with these 'titles,' and basic themes, emerged over time.

Gregory's *libri miraculorum/virtutum* (although on one occasion, in *Hist.* 3.16, Gregory refers to having written of something: "in libro Miraculorum sancti Iuliani").

117 For instance, *Hist.* 1.45 ("quod in libro illo, quem de eius vita conscripsimus, memoravimus"), referring to *VP* 2; *Hist.* 2.21 ("sicut in libro vitae eius scripsimus"), referring to *VP* 3; *Hist.* 2.36 ("scripta sunt in libro vitae eius"), referring to *VP* 4; *Hist.* 3.2 ("Reliqua ... scripta sunt in libro, quem de eius vita conposuimus"), referring to *VP* 4; *Hist.* 4.36 ("sicut in libro vitae eius scripsimus"), referring to *VP* 8.3; *Hist.* 4.37 ("in libro, quem de vita eius scripsimus, memoravimus"), referring to *VP* 10; *Hist.* 5.7 ("quas in libro vitae eius scripsimus"), referring to *VP* 15; *Hist.* 5.9 ("sicut in libro vitae eius scripsimus"), referring to *VP* 11; and *Hist.* 5.10 ("Scripsimus et de huius vita libellum"), referring to *VP* 9.

118 *GC* 15 ("Huius sancti vitam nos scripsimus"), referring to *VP* 16; *GC* 24 ("in libro quem de eius vita conscripsimus"), referring to *VP* 19; *GC* 25 ("Senoch abbatis vita dudum a nobis scripta fuit"), referring to *VP* 15; *GC* 38 ("sicut in libro vitae eius scripsimus"), referring to *VP* 12; and *VJ* 50 ("in libro vitae"), referring to *VP* 8. The *VP* does not seem to be referenced in either the *VM* or the *GM*.

119 As mentioned earlier, in *Hist.* 4.5, Gregory referred to a story found in *VP* 6, using a phrase ("sicut supra diximus") that he reserved for internal cross-references within the *Histories*. This (and other examples) is probably a sign that the sheer scale of Gregory's total corpus meant he occasionally lost track of where individual references occurred. Alternatively, this might be taken as an indication that the material in *VP* 6 was originally intended to be in the *Histories*, but was later removed, without deleting the corresponding cross-references.

4.5.4   *Changing Plans for Publication*

At his death, as will be argued shortly, Gregory seems to have had a grand vision connecting the *Miracula* works and indeed of publishing them together once they were completed. There are strong indications, however, that like so much else in his hagiographical corpus, this design was not constant throughout the period of composition.[120]

There are, for instance, signs that, at one stage at least, Gregory intended that the *GC* and *GM* would be issued as companion volumes: a two-book set, as it were, independent of his other works. Within the *Histories*, cross-references to content from these two books do not, as a general rule, cite them specifically, instead they refer the reader to what Gregory calls his *Liber Miraculorum*.[121] In this context, the *VP* Preface's close association of the *GC* and *GM* is revealing.[122] So too, is the earliest literary citation of Gregory's *Miracula*. This is by Baudonivia in her *Vita Radegundis*, which was written after Gregory's death, but before 614. There she referred her readers to what Gregory had written in his "Book of Miracles" – "in libro miraculorum."[123] The reference is to a story in *GC* 104 and,

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120   Equally, it is worth noting that Gregory never settled on a form of categorization that satisfied him, struggling to fit the works into a single genre. This is principally an acknowledgment of the genuine difference in genre between the *VP* and the other *Miracula*. More scholarly attention might helpfully be directed to the question of how different the works are from each other and where they overlap. *VM* 1–4 are, for instance, quite similar to *VJ*, and the *GC* is akin to the *GM*, but the *VP* is very different from all the others, as Gregory recognized. Taken as a whole, the *Miracula* texts do not quite seem to fit normal patterns of hagiography, even though the term has occasionally been used here as a convenient generic alternative. With the possible exception of *VP*, they are certainly not 'saints' lives,' although Heinzelmann, "Une source," made a strong case for seeing Gregory's works as part of the shift from 'late antique' hagiography to that of the 'medieval' period.

121   For instance, *Hist.* 1.47 ("Meminimus de his in libro Miraculorum"), referring to *GC* 31; and *Hist.* 2.5 ("in libro Miraculorum scripsimus"), referring to *GC* 71. Others examples include: *Hist.* 8.2, referring to *GC* 97; *Hist.* 9.2, referring to *GC* 104; and *Hist.* 9.15, referring to *GC* 13. Not all references are to the *GC* though: in *Hist.* 9.24 ("in libro Miraculorum memini"), Gregory is referring to *GM* 95. The references to the *Liber Miraculorum* should not be confused with mentions of his *libri miraculorum* (for instance, in *Hist.* 10.29), where he makes clear he is speaking about the hagiographic corpus as a whole and not simply the *GC* and *GM*.

122   *VP* Preface: "I had decided to write only about what has been achieved with divine help at the tombs of the blessed martyrs and confessors" ("Statueram quidem illa tantum scriber, quae ad sepulchra beatissimorum martyrum confessorumque divinitus gesta sunt").

123   The full quote is: "Sed quantum praesens vidit oculis antequam eam sepeliret, de eius virtutibus, in libro miraculorum quem composuit inseruit." Bruno Krusch, (ed.), *Baudovinia, De vita sanctae Radegundis liber II*, MGH SRM 2: 392–395 at 392. "But he included in his

therefore, may well point towards the same conclusion: at times, Gregory wished to present the *GM* and *GC* as two books on complementary topics, together making up one *opus*, which he described as his *Liber Miraculorum*.[124] The extent to which this vision survived Gregory's final organization of his corpus is debatable;[125] but once more the evidence should warn us not to make too many assumptions about the consistency either of Gregory's intent or of the shape of his corpus.[126]

4.6   Conclusion: Gregory's Vision of His Works at Death

In one sense, perhaps, this long and detailed examination of the composition and chronology of Gregory's hagiographic corpus may not appear to have moved us very far from what scholars have previously pointed out about the dating of these texts. Krusch and Van Dam, and even Monod, all pointed to inconsistencies in the corpus and implied that concrete dating for each *libellus* was scarcely possible.[127] This conclusion has been comprehensively validated here. But so simple a conclusion has rarely satisfied scholars, who have commonly embedded it in a contradiction, namely that specific dates of composition can still be provided for the various works.[128] The desire and search for dates of writing is understandable. Nonetheless, it has led to something approaching self-contradiction. Rightly emphasizing elements of chronological inter-dependence and the extent to which these rendered the question of

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     Book of Miracles what he saw with his own eyes of her miraculous powers before he buried her."

124   Such an intent would be neatly paralleled by his 'original' plan for the *VM*.

125   Certainly, as far as the *GC* and *GM* are concerned, it is difficult to see how Gregory's references in the *Histories* to content from both of them, interchangeably, as from his *Liber Miraculorum,* can have made sense unless those two works at least were to be published together. If they had been published separately, and previously, as the discrete individual works that they are usually treated as, then Gregory could not have expected his readers to know which one he meant.

126   Furthermore, as the cross-references to the various chapters of the *VP* as individual books suggest, the very collection within a collection that the *VP* represents may have been something of an afterthought.

127   Goffart also commented: "We are well advised to concentrate on the finished ten books [of *Histories*], alongside the *Miracula*, just as the author left them at the end of his life." Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), 124–125.

128   As detailed in Table 4.1.

the chronology of composition for the individual works irrelevant and insoluble, scholars still sought to provide answers. We need to be more open about our ignorance. Gregory was working on the hagiography until his death. There is no absolute answer on their dating beyond that.

Confident statements about the dating of individual *Miracula* books, based on comparisons with Gregory's other works, are undermined, and in the last analysis rendered meaningless, by evidence – direct or indirect – that each work ultimately relies on books which rely on it. The circularity and the contradictory cross-references build up mutual dependencies which make no chronological sense, especially given the clearly unfinished nature of works like the *GC* which feature prominently in these 'circles.'[129] The Gordian knot, which Gregory has tied, cannot be cut by any permutation of dates for individual 'complete' and 'published' works. Such attempts simply trap one in Gregory's contradictory cross-references, like the soldiers in Escher's staircase climbing ever upwards but going all the time around in circles. This cannot be solved by postulating a 'two versions' theory. Rather, when the *Miracula* show signs of Gregory at work in the 590s, this is not a sign that he was revising completed texts, but that he was continuing his work on unfinished ones.[130] The only reasonable explanation of the evidence is to accept that Gregory was composing these books concurrently over an extended period and that he never finally finished or published them, but, rather, simply left them in their current, highly developed, but as yet unrevised form at his death.[131]

Nonetheless, concurrent writing is not enough to explain the mutual cross-references fully, if it is assumed that Gregory nevertheless intended to publish the works separately. In such a scenario, the cross-references would still have

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129   As a result one cannot argue as Van Dam, *GM*, xii, did, that: "He [Gregory] had, however, apparently completed it [*GM*] by the early 590s when he included a cross-reference to it in a chapter of his final book of histories." Gregory was perfectly content to cross-reference *VM* 4 and *GC* in the *Hist.* even though both were unfinished.

130   Another oddity that the 'two versions' theory would not explain is a reference in *GC* 93 to "Charimeris, who is now the referendary of King Childebert" ("Charimeris, qui nunc referendarius Childeberthi regis habetur"). Charimeris became bishop of Verdun in 588 (*Hist.* 9.23). Thus, it is difficult to maintain that, in the 590s, Gregory went through revising a completed work to produce the 'second' version surviving today, when he retained such glaringly anachronistic references. Murray's comment on a similar proposal for dating for the *Histories* is apposite: "He [Gregory] finished his *Histories* in 594; if he wrote the passage to accommodate momentary conditions years earlier, he had plenty of time to revise or adjust the prediction; he never did." Murray, "Chronology and Composition," 169.

131   Not including *VM* 1–3.

ultimately made no sense, with readers confused as to why they were being referred to a work that was not available. Thus, to complete the picture and provide a truly comprehensive explanation for all the evidence, it is necessary to accept not only that Gregory wrote each work over a long period of time, not only that he was writing his *Miracula* works concurrently, not only that they were unrevised and unpublished at his death, but also, and just as importantly, that his final plan was to release them together.

The evidence supports this view. References to the hagiographic corpus as a group in *Hist.* 10.31 and especially in the *GC* Prologue, where they are even ordered, imply something along those lines. There is another hint at the plan, and indeed to the final form it took, in the *VP* Preface. As already noted, Gregory refers to the *GC* twice in the *VP* Preface. The first reference is a general one in which the *GC* is coupled with the *GM*; but the second reference is more specific: "I have indeed related, more briefly, some facts about the life of some of these men in my book on the Confessors, *below*."[132]

The textual inter-relations between the two works have already been dealt with in depth, but here the important word is *inferiore*. What does Gregory mean by saying "my book on the Confessors, below"? Why would he refer to something he has already apparently written, and is now expanding on, as being "below"? There is a simple explanation: Gregory was planning to publish the *Miracula* books together and in this multi-volume work the *VP* would be placed before the *GC*, thus rendering the latter 'below' the former. This would make sense in the context of the catalogue in the *GC* Prologue which ordered the *Miracula* works *GM*, *VJ*, *VM* 1–4, *VP* and finally *GC*.[133] In such a scenario it would be perfectly natural for the *VP* to refer to the *GC* as "below." A similar reference is found in the *GC* Prologue, where the *GM* is described as "primus libellus" – "the first book."[134]

If Gregory's plan, interrupted by death, was to publish the *Miracula* books at the same time, together, in such a way, then the mutual inter-dependencies

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132   "Et scripsi, fateor, in *inferiore* confessorum libro aliqua de quorundam vitam." Emphasis added.

133   Listing the works together in the prologue to the *GC*, the work that stood at the end of the collection, would also make sense. Manuscripts such as Codex Parisiensis lat. nr. 2204 or Codex Parisiensis lat. membranaceus nr. 2204 contain all the works in precisely this order (Krusch, 462–463), which is the sequence Krusch used for his edition.

134   The organization suggested here, therefore, differs somewhat from that proposed by M. Heinzelmann, "Die Funktion des Wunders in der spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Historiographie," in *Mirakel im Mittelalter: Konzeptionem, Erscheinungsformen, Deutungun,* (eds.) M. Heinzelmann, K. Herbers and D. Bauer (Stuttgart, 2002), 23–61.

across the corpus would no longer pose any problems of comprehension. They would make perfect sense had the various *Miracula* books been completed and collected in a single multi-volume work.[135] Instead of readers picking up a *libellus* and being referred to another which was not yet 'in the public domain,' they would be aware that the references were simply to another book in the eight-volume set they had before them. In the end, however, Gregory's plan remained aspirational: his complex corpus was not completed.

We can end with one final point, the evidence of which, while hardly conclusive, has perhaps been too often overlooked: there is no sign Gregory had a reputation during his life as the author of hagiographic works. Fortunatus' letter enclosing his own *Vita Martini* shows he is aware that Gregory was himself working on a text on Saint Martin, but there is nothing more detailed than that. Fortunatus' other epistles to his friend testify to poetry Gregory composed and shared with him, none of which has survived; but neither there nor elsewhere does one get the impression of an author of such a substantial catalogue of hagiographic works as survives, and which scholars have assumed were published and distributed in some form a significant period before his death. Such an absence of evidence is of course no certain evidence of absence, but it is intriguing, somewhat surprising and implicitly supportive of the present conclusions based on other grounds. Gregory's reputation as an author was almost entirely posthumous, which is hardly surprising given that, as we have seen, almost all of his works must in the last analysis be concluded to have remained unrevised, unfinished and unpublished at his death.[136]

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135   There still remains a question of whether, even at the end, Gregory had decided quite where the VP fitted, given the work's different treatments in the two 'catalogues': GC Prologue included the VP among the *Miracula*, but *Hist.* 10.31 did not. Since the manuscript order predominantly follows that of the GC's list (Krusch 462–463; and see Bourgain, 5.1 below on manuscripts), it probably makes most sense to see this as Gregory's final, final, version of how the works would fit together. But this was not always and inevitably the plan. Whether the ten-volume organization of the non-historical works implied in *Hist.* 10.31 ever represented a definitive design for the corpus at any stage, rather than simply being a passing idea, or even merely an assertion of authorship, is unclear: certainly, it is not underpinned by cross-references across the 'ten' works or any evidence from the manuscript tradition.

136   I would like to thank Sandy Murray for his careful advice and constant encouragement from which both this paper and its author have greatly benefitted. He is not, of course, responsible for the conclusions or any errors.

Appendix: A Context for the Original Conception of the *VJ*?

Realizing that Gregory's conception of his works shifted raises interesting questions about what his initial intentions may have been in individual cases. Lack of evidence, and changes in Gregory's plans over time, mean such questions are, for the most part, unanswerable:[137] but this does not preclude all informed speculation or even some plausible suggestions. In particular there are subtle signs that, despite not being finished at his death, Gregory may have begun the *VJ* quite early in his career.

As discussed above, *VJ* 32 implies that, at one point, Gregory had intended to compose a much shorter work on Saint Julian than he, in fact, finally, created. In that chapter, he says: "Now it is proper to end this book by recounting a few [stories] about those [other] places that have [Julian's] relics."[138] Van Dam argued that, "perhaps at first he [Gregory] intended to conclude the *VJ* with the stories about Saint Julian's assistance in establishing his authority as the new bishop of Tours."[139] The *VJ* as a whole cannot, for the reasons set out in detail above, be dated early in Gregory's episcopacy. That does not mean that this period could not have represented a stage in the work's conception.

There are other indications that Gregory may have been engaged in this work very early on. First, given that *VM* 1 and 2 are 'early,' it is perhaps telling that the *VJ* on the whole treats its material in much the same way as the *VM* does. Both works share the same step-by-step style, with short, generally quite basic chapters. Simpler than Gregory's style in the other *Miracula* works, this approach could, arguably, reflect Gregory's younger mode of writing. Of course, it might simply be that, in the *VJ*, Gregory was imitating the *VM*'s template; but it is equally possible that the influence was the other way round. If there was a point soon after becoming bishop when Gregory thought he would try to wrap up the *VJ*, then it is likely he had started writing before his 573 episcopal appointment. In such a scenario, therefore, the *VJ* would have been begun earlier than the *VM*, at least in terms of Gregory's intention to write and his collection of materials.

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137 Nor does the fact that no specific positive 'dating' reference in the *Miracula* (with the exception of *VM* 1–3) clearly relates to a time before the later 580s mean that Gregory need only have started working on these books then.

138 *VM* 32: "nunc pauca de locis illis, in quibus eius habentur reliquiae, disserentes, finem huius libelli facere placet, devotione commonente" (translation modified slightly).

139 Van Dam, *VJ*, 162, referring to the group *VJ* 34–40. This is apparently supported at first sight by Gregory's description in *VJ* 34 of his visit to Brioude, following his consecration, as "some events that I experienced recently" ("haec ego dudum experta"); but caution is required here, since, as shown above, such temporal adverbs do not inspire much confidence as evidence of dating.

It is even possible to suggest a context for such a plan. Gregory probably intended the *VM* as an act of public diplomacy aimed at proving to the clerics and people of the diocese of Tours his own special dedication, love and loyalty to their patron saint. Perhaps, if Gregory did begin the *VJ* earlier than 573, he had a similar purpose in view, but a different location in mind: Clermont. This was an episcopate which was every bit as much connected to his family as was Tours. There was nothing inevitable about Gregory's appointment to the latter.[140] Thus, it would have been quite understandable if a young Gregory had thought, or even expected, that he would become bishop of Clermont at the next vacancy. The *VJ* would have been an ideal work for a prospective or newly appointed bishop to impress the members of that diocese. When Clermont was filled in 571, however, and Gregory was not chosen, the work on Saint Julian would have lost its immediate utility. After Gregory's appointment at Tours, the early draft of the *VJ* would have been a convenient model for the writing of the now more relevant *VM*. Further work on the *VJ*, after failing to complete it in the aftermath of obtaining Tours, continued over the rest of Gregory's life, but with less sense of urgency, and rather as an act of personal devotion.[141]

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140   W. McDermott, "Felix of Nantes: a Merovingian Bishop," *Traditio* 31 (1975), 1–24, at 14–16, suggests reasons to believe that Gregory's appointment at Tours might have been a surprise more widely.

141   The fact that *VM* 1 Prologue implies, without stating, that it is Gregory's first work, is no obstacle to such a theory, since, clearly, there is no suggestion that the *VJ* would have been 'complete' by that stage.

The Works of Gregory of Tours: Manuscripts, Language, and Style

Pascale Bourgain

5.1   The Manuscripts

It so happens that Gregory of Tours, one of the most prolific 6th-century authors, comes down to us in quite a large number of manuscripts. Some of them, though not contemporary with the author, are nevertheless notably old and rival in age the earliest of the Merovingian diplomas that survive as originals. The work of Gregory of Tours is both a mine of information for historians of 6th-century Gaul and the subject of innumerable debates. What should be, indeed what is, a treasure-trove, however, also presents very difficult linguistic and historical problems, and the diverse expectations of the users – historians, hagiographers, and linguists – makes the treasure a field of multiple tensions.[1] Fundamental questions underlie the different perspectives and scholarly aspirations. How should Gregory of Tours be edited on the basis of the material available to us, with its varied histories of transmission, and how should we understand and evaluate this material?[2]

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1   Analogous problems exist in the Visigothic and Mozarabic spheres; see, Juan Gil Fernandez, "Para la edicion de los textos visigodos y mozarabes," *Habis* 4 (1975), 189–236. His final advice is that the wording of the manuscripts should be retained as much as possible, because that wording reflects the usage of the age and its phonetics.

2   On details about the appearance of the manuscripts, see P. Bourgain, Martin Heinzelmann, "L'œuvre de Grégoire de Tours: la diffusion des manuscrits," in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace*

Gregory had a precise idea of the manner in which his works should be presented. He makes a list of them at the end of the entry that he composed for himself as nineteenth bishop of Tours at the end of his historical work (*Hist.* 10.31). He left aside the adaptations of Greek texts (*Passio septem dormientium*) and Latin ones (*Miracula Andreae*), and a lost collection, with preface, of the masses of Sidonius Apollinaris (we do not know what in it belonged to Gregory, perhaps only a laudatory introduction). But he very likely intended to gather together the whole of his works in twenty books, the *Histories* first, then the hagiographic books in the widest sense: eight books on the miracles of the saints (*Miracula*), next a book on the psalter, and, last, the one that he calls *De cursibus ecclesiasticis*, and which we customarily call *De cursu stellarum* – a treatise on the miracles of the Creator God, including the astronomical observations of the constellations. He doubtless wished to have ten hagiographic books to balance the ten books of history, and he further sought a progressive widening of ideas from the baseness of earthly men to the purity of sainthood, as well as to the grandeur of Christology and of Creation.[3]

Did such a twenty-book archetype exist? In its entirety it would have been too large for the book-form of the age and would in any case have been contained in two different volumes, one for the *Histories*, and one for the others.[4] Because of its programmatic emphasis, the preface of the *Gloria martyrum*, which always heads the complete manuscripts of the hagiography, seems suited to open the hagiographic collection. Yet Gregory, in his catalogue in the *Histories*, lists the *Liber vitae patrum* after the seven books of miracles, whereas, in the complete manuscripts of the hagiographic works, it now appears in the seventh position, not the eighth. One may therefore doubt that Gregory, when dying, left his great work in perfect order and finalized once and for all (some not wholly coherent traits in the *Histories* suggest the same thing). He placed this ensemble of twenty books under the protection of his successors to the bishopric of Tours.

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gaulois: Actes du Congrès international, Tours, 3–5 nov. 1994, (eds.) Nancy Gauthier et Henri Galinié (Tours, 1997), 263–317; P. Bourgain, "Gregorius Turonensis ep.," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo: Mediaeval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, Texts and Transmission 1, (eds.) Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi, Millennio Medievale 50, Strumenti e studi n. s. 8 (Firenze, 2004), 152–168.

3   Martin Heinzelmann (cf. below, Ch. 9) has shown that Gregory's reading of the Psalms has a wholly Christological perspective.

4   See P. Bourgain, "Entre plusieurs fidélités: l'idéal, l'originel et les témoins, à propos de la tradition de Grégoire de Tours," in *Vom Nutzen des Edierens: Akten des intern. Kongresses zum 150-jährigen Bestehen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Wien, Juni 2004*, (eds.) B. Merta, A. Sommerlechner and H. Weigl, Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband 47 (Wien 2005), 49–64, here 63.

We know nevertheless that his entreaties were not heeded and that his works were altered, in the case of the *Histories*, or circulated out of order and moreover rather late, in the case of the hagiographical and religious ones.

These works were finished, or almost finished, at Gregory's death; they may have been in course of clean copying (the look of certain of the oldest witnesses suggests they may imitate in their layout an initial model with a neat uncial). They surely were not autographs. It is very likely that Gregory composed by dictation. The bishop must have had one or more secretaries, whose spelling habits could differ one from the other (one need only look as an analogy to the appearance and variability of the barely later Merovingian charters). Even if Gregory proofed the copies afterwards, ordered corrections, and added cross-references, nevertheless the final copy, the one that represented his work in the archives of the bishopric of Tours, was certainly not by his hand. It is even probable that, if he proofed the final copy or, more probably, had it read to him, his attention did not go to the spelling or punctuation, which were not his responsibility. These lost originals are accessible to us only through more or less distant copies.

The *Histories*, in the text of the solemn balance sheet concluding the last book, is dated to 594. Gregory probably died on November 17 of this same year. Now, since Venantius Fortunatus makes no allusion to the *Histories*, and since there is no cross-reference to this work in the non-historical books, it is virtually certain that the *Histories* was not made public in Gregory's lifetime, unlike the books on St. Martin, which Venantius mentions. The latest editor, Kai P. Hilchenbach (see below), offers good reasons for dating the archetype of the text tradition of the *Histories* to about 600, thus a few years after the author's death.

The fate of the non-historical works is a little different. They probably were dispersed and, at least in part, published before the bishop's death. Their future depended possibly on a gathering of copies revised by the author even if their rather late diffusion, in groups of works or in extracts, leads one to doubt that there had ever existed the unique exemplar of the ten books that Gregory wished to bring together. The two non-hagiographic books in particular are never copied with the others in Carolingian didactic collections, as would have likely happened, if originally they had been copied into the same physical collection. The treatise on the psalms has come to us in fragmentary form, in dispersed witnesses that do not antedate Carolingian times. *De cursu stellarum*, which is in three parts, circulated in separate, fragmentary pieces in pre-Carolingian collections (7th–8th centuries), mainly in German regions or northern Italy. The final part, on the constellations, is found especially in French territories from the 9th century on; and later on, this text, in an anonymous and incomplete form, joins late collections on the marvels of the world or on astronomy. All these are

debris, strongly lessening the probability of an original, physically unique corpus made available for publication.[5]

The *Miracula*, the eight hagiographic books, may have circulated before 800, but little remains of such a diffusion. The remnants are, first, a leaf probably written at Corbie, and, next, several texts in a Vienna legendary of about 800 originating from St. Amand.[6] The latter prove the earlier circulation of the hagiographic works: the prologue of the *Vita Venantii* from *VP* 16 was used for the *Vita Severini* of the legendary; *GC* 75 served to rework the *Vita Simplicii* of the same collection and *GC* 45 apparently for rewriting the *Vita Romani*; in addition, *Hist.* 2.7 was taken into the Life of St. Anianus. Success came to Gregory's hagiographies all at once in the 9th and 10th centuries, at a time when an earlier text, to be widely diffused, had to be updated to the new linguistic norms. Even if there were few intermediary exemplars, those that were then copied were from the first subject to an energetic smoothing of their Merovingian characteristics. This success, the ease in copying separately this or that chapter of various saints, and the habit of constantly reworking hagiographic texts, consequently make the problem of diffusion extremely complex. Down to the 11th century, there exist about twenty-five complete ensembles of the *Miracula* in different families that do not display the same lacunae; but the abundance of specimens aided contamination in France and Germany, even though some copies come from the regions of Tours and Clermont-Ferrand, where manuscripts left by Gregory had the best chance of having been preserved with some care.[7] From the 12th century onward, a more and more gap-filled and selective textual tradition comes to us in the scattering of the

5   We will add here only the bibliography later than the panorama of manuscripts given in Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'œuvre de Grégoire de Tours" (cited in n. 2), and briefly updated in P. Bourgain, "Gregorius Turonensis ep." (cited in n. 2). Several manuscripts of rare works are identified by John J. Contreni, "Reading Gregory of Tours in the Middle Ages," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) K. Mitchell and I. Wood (Leiden/Boston/Köln, 2002), 419–434, including Vat. lat. 8565, 241–266, for the *Miracula Andreae,* and seven manuscripts for the *Septem dormientes*, extracts and hagiographic manuscripts, 433–434. Barbara Obrist, "Les manuscrits du *De cursu stellarum* de Grégoire de Tours et le manuscrit 422, Laon, B. Mun.," *Scriptorium* 56 (2002), 335–345, draws attention to four manuscripts discovered later than the work of Krusch (Bern, Burgerbibliothek 22; Laon, Bibliothèque municipale 422; Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emmanuele III, lat. 2, and London, Lambeth Palace 414).

6   Max Diesenberger, "Der Cvp 420 – die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen und ihre Gestaltung im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern," in *L'hagiographie mérovingienne à travers ses réécritures*, (eds.) M. Goullet, M. Heinzelmann, C. Veyrard-Cosme, Beihefte der Francia 71 (Ostfildern 2010), 219–248. The texts cited are, respectively, numbers 231–232, 234 and 235, of this description.

7   The textual proximity of MSS 3 et 3a of Krusch, one from Clermont-Ferrand, the other from Tours, two poles of Gregory's career, suggest that they reproduce, in the ninth century,

late manuscripts. The various books were also circulated separately, either by filtering out the collections of works devoted to one saint (Martin or Julian of Brioude), or by joining one of these elements to larger hagiographic collections. The four books of the *De virtutibus sancti Martini = VM* (BHL 5618) are the most frequently copied work of Gregory of Tours. They were joined, in whole or in part, to fifty-odd booklets on St Martin that bring together the texts essential to the cult of the saint, including certain chapters of Gregory's *Histories* devoted to him. This European success story lasted to the end of the Middle Ages. Finally, chapters devoted to this or that saint were joined to their hagiographic dossier and circulated separately. There, again, St Martin has the lion's share: from the 8th century, the extracts from Gregory were joined to dossiers of the saint (we are referring to the famous and widespread *Martinellus*).[8] Then at Tours luxurious *libelli* were fashioned that brought together five chapters extracted from Gregory's works, both the *Histories* and the *VM*. We have four 9th-century Tours manuscripts in this form, and even old copies of it are numerous. Other saints (Ilidius, Eparchius, Nicetius of Lyons, Saturninus of Toulouse, Brictius, already in the Martinellus, and Salvius of Albi) were also honoured by the circulation of dossiers including extracts from both the *Histories* and the hagiographic works. In their turn, these dossiers were taken, often in abridged form, into the great lectionaries of the 12th and 13th centuries. The presence of Gregory's hagiographical works in this type of manuscript is large but discreet. His name does not appear, and the text of his work is vulgarized by the number and normalization of copies.

Despite the difficulties raised by the diffusion of Gregory's *Libri miraculorum*, the most acute problems in understanding the transmission of his works involves the historical books, *Histories*. Not surprisingly, this is the subject that has aroused the most stubborn efforts by scholars to find solutions.

As it happens, the *Histories* is a work for which a considerable pre-Carolingian tradition exists. We have traces of excerpts – several chapters in collections of canon law, homilies, or hagiography (manuscripts bearing the sigla A3 in the MGH edition, but the manuscripts are not earlier than the 9th century).[9] These selections prove that the work was known in its complete form at an early date. We also have dispersed fragments of a 7th-century

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two brother-copies, a Tours original and its direct copy sent to a city where the bishop retained ties.

8   On the *Martinellus*, see the bibliography cited in Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'œuvre de Grégoire de Tours" (cited n. 2), n. 110; cf. below, Ch. 16.

9   See also W. Maaz, *Gregor von Tours*, in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 6, fasc. 1 (Göttingen, 1988), cols 117–125, for the use made of Gregory's works by the historians and in the collections of exempla.

manuscript (A2) originating from Micy, thus from the Loire valley, in two columns of Merovingian uncial with large running titles and initials.[10] It surely exemplifies the standard of a deluxe edition, applied in Gregory's time to important biblical or patristic manuscripts. It is doubtless close to what Gregory wished for the edition of his major work. Paul the Deacon also utilized a complete manuscript, perhaps at Lorsch. It would have been a copy of this manuscript, or one of its descendants, that Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino caused to be copied in the 11th century. That copy, A1 (Montecassino, Biblioteca della Badia 275), turns out to be the only complete exemplar of the ten-book whole that has come down to us. But it has shortcomings. It was copied in Italy by a scribe who no longer understood Merovingian spelling (still grasped by the first Carolingian copyists, who were used to rewording Merovingian forms according to the reformed norms). Besides, the A1 copyist did not much care about the events and names of central Francia, which meant nothing to him. He is extremely unreliable. What his model had must often be inferred from his false corrections and from his errors.

Full manuscripts, necessarily stemming from the Tours original, therefore existed, even though the surviving examples of them are astonishingly rare. Other waves of copying would exploit the text of the *Histories*, in order to make it useful to the period when they were made, obviously without the least care for the author's ideas.

We start with what Krusch calls the B family, that of the truncated manuscripts, whose number of full examples has stamped itself on the study of 'Merovingian Latin'. They stem from the north and northeast of France, from the 7th to the end of the 8th centuries, and their diffusion must have been extensive, since the reconstruction of their stemma proves that certain ones (B5, late 7th century) already embody a third or fourth generation of copying. Further, the use made of this B version by Fredegar, towards 658–660, shows that this Merovingian 'edition' was already in circulation and may thus date from the vicinity of 640–650.

This is a genuine edition. The reviser wished to keep only the account of events, an account of facts, as it were, with the least possible ecclesiastical matter. The four last books, very favourable to Guntram, king of Burgundy and detailing events of Childebert II's reign, did not suit the reviser and were eliminated. There are indications that show that the lacuna does not come from an

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10   See the description of the surviving fragment: Leyden, Univ. Bibl., BPL 21, by G. Gerritsen-Geywitz and W. Gerritsen, "'Old is Beautiful': Het oudste handschrift van Gregorius' *Historiae*," in *Rondom Gregorius van Tours*, (eds.) M. De Jong, E. Rose, and H. Teunis, Utrechtse Historische Cahiers 22 (2001) 2 and 3, 37–54.

incomplete prototype but was programmatic: two chapters of Book 7 are included at the end of Book 4 in one of the two sub-families. As Martin Heinzelmann has shown, the editor worked from the table of contents, without bothering to eliminate the cross-references to chapters missing thereafter; and he also thus allowed the copying of ecclesiastical matter within chapters that were not so identified for elimination on the basis of the table of contents.[11] What we have therefore is a vigorous reduction (one-quarter for the first six books), embodying a political project that was strongly laicized: a history of the Franks in effect. It was this version that was taken over by the historical works of the age: Pseudo-Fredegar, who used only Books 2–6, and then the *Liber Historiae Francorum* in the 8th century (726/27 and 736, this latter recension travelling under the name of Gregory of Tours).[12] In both these works, the inclination towards a lay history is very strong, so that it is not unexpected that, even if the authors were also acquainted with the ten-book version of Gregory (as may be proved for the *Liber historiae Francorum*), they preferred the more secular updating.[13]

The oldest manuscripts are luxurious, and quite close to the layout of the oldest fragments of the full family, A2.[14] Even in the manuscripts with Merovingian cursive (B5), the titles in uncials have a certain solemnity. None of them contains anything but the *Histories*. E.A. Lowe and Bernard Bischoff have slightly modified the datings of Bruno Krusch as follows: in the first branch, B1 (Cambrai 624) was very luxuriously copied toward 700 in eastern France and B2 (Brussels 406) toward the end of 8th century in northern Italy. Both are augmented by the last four books (7–10) being taken from the branch with the complete number of books. As far as B2 is concerned, there is no real codicological unity, for the first

11   M. Heinzelmann, "Grégoire de Tours 'père de l'histoire de France'?" in *Histoires de France, historiens de la France. Actes du colloque intern., Reims, 14 et 15 mai 1993,* (eds.) Y.-M. Bercé and P. Contamine (Paris, 1994), 19–45; and idem *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* (Cambridge, 2001; transl. from the original German edition, Darmstadt, 1994), 199–201 (German ed., 173–175).

12   R.A. Gerberding, "Paris, Bibl. nat. latin 7906: An Unnoticed Very Early Fragment of the *Liber historiae Francorum*," *Traditio* 43 (1987), 381–386. And see Roger Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken,* MGH Studien und Texte 44 (Hanover 2007) ; and idem, "Fredegar," in *Authors of the Middle Ages* 4/12–13 (Aldershot, 1996).

13   Krusch SRM 2 : 217, noted the use of *Hist.* 4.19, which is not found in manuscripts of the B redaction. And see also Bourgain-Heinzelmann, 'L'œuvre de Grégoire de Tours', 284.

14   One may have an idea of it from Henri Omont's facsimile of MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 17654, as well as from the plates of Lowe, *CLA* X, **104 (A2) and VIII, 1122 (B6). Only a leaf remains of this last MS, written in France in the 8th century, but it seems as though the aim of the copy was not a faithful transmission of the work.

six books are in uncial and the rest are in semi-uncial. Here again, the attempt was made in B1 and B2 to fill out a text that was recognized to have been abridged by comparing other exemplars in circulation, as the reasons for the original B editor suppressing the last four books were no longer understood. These two filled-out manuscripts formerly led to the belief that this branch of B originally involved the whole of the ten books, stripped of the last books only in the other branch to be next considered.

The other branch of the B family – the one that erroneously moves a leaf of Book 7 to the end of Book 4 – consists of three complete manuscripts: B5 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 17655), of the end of the 7th century, in a Luxeuil hand continued in Corbie; B4 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 17654), from Jouarre, a little later than the foregoing; and B3 (Leiden, Voss. lat. 4° 63), from Tours, of the first half of the 8th century. Now, this second B family definitely produced a large number of copies in the 7th and 8th centuries, because the degradation of the text presupposes several copying generations, notably in the case of B5; and, as has been noted already, it was used by contemporary historians (Fredegar, and the *Liber historiae Francorum*). It suddenly fades out after the 8th century and was no longer recopied in spite of its surviving witnesses, a consequence, doubtless, of it no longer meeting the needs of the time. The linguistic condition of these witnesses, written in an 'evolved' language, that is to say one moving away from the strictures of classical Latin, does not suffice to explain their neglect, since the Montecassino manuscript was copied in the heart of the 11th century from a model incorporating the same Merovingian traits.

Contemporary with the last copies of the second B branch is the oldest witness to the new 'wave' of manuscripts – that of Carolingian times. Bruno Krusch assembled them under the siglum C, but the homogeneity of this mainly Germanic family is not obvious, and the grouping is no doubt the main weakness of the MGH editor's reconstruction.[15]

C1 (Heidelberg, Universitätbibliothek, Pal. lat. 864), written at St-Nazarius of Lorsch toward 800, probably proceeds from a B manuscript close to B1 and B2, though reintroducing several chapters of Books 4 and 5. But it eliminates even more chapters than the B family, those reporting local events, prodigies, or natural phenomena. What remains forms a political history. When the manuscript

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15   On this group of manuscripts, see Helmut Reimitz, "Social networks and identities in Frankish historiography. New aspects of the textual history of Greory of Tours' *Historiae*," in *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages. Texts, Resources and Artefacts*, (eds.) R. Corradini, M. Diesenberger, and H. Reimitz (Leiden 2003), 229–268. And see below, Ch. 15.

reaches the four last books, it necessarily took them from a complete witness. We recall that the model of A1, taken by Paul the Deacon to Monte Cassino, probably came from Lorsch and must therefore be very close to or even identical with the exemplar used by C1. In these four books (7–10), the editor continued the weeding process and was even more selective than the reviser of B: only half of Gregory's chapters remain. And when he reached the end, he eliminated the three, very long last chapters of the work, which set it in both an ecclesiological and Tours perspective, and in which Gregory puts his entire work in its true perspective. Moreover Books 9 and 10 are joined into a single Book 9, and Book 4 of the Pseudo-Fredegar chronicle is turned into Book 10 of the new historical compendium, taking up the chronological thread down to the death of Charles Martel in 741. The compiler thus assembled a complete political history of the Franks down to the near-advent of the Carolingians. The C class of the *Histories* practically blends with class v of Fredegar.

Nevertheless, although an ending formed in this way characterizes this C class, the class is not very homogeneous. A manuscript of the third quarter of the 9th century, C2 (Namur, Bibliothèque municipale 11), is even more drastic for the beginning of the work than C1 for Books 4–6. It stems from a branch in which a gap in Book 4.25–26 (which seems not to be ideological) characterizes both C2 and the other manuscripts attributable to the same family and to the Capetian D family (to be spoken of later). C2 therefore proceeds from an accidentally mutilated exemplar of a complete manuscript, but its perspective is the same as that of C1, and its editor eliminated more and more. Starting with Book 7, he exactly followed the suppressions of C1. He probably had before him a C1-type copy, for he collated and indicated *hic deest* in the margins of the chapters that are not in C1; and these chapters would be later added in C1 in the 10th century, which proves that the two witnesses were kept quite near each other for this whole period. C2 therefore embodies two branches at the same time, a combined A and B for the start of the text, and afterward one that aligns with C1. Bruno Krusch recognized the importance of C2 when he took in hand the edition of Arndt, who had made little use of it. It seems to be quite conservative, retaining Merovingian usage, notably in the spelling of Germanic proper names.

This contamination proves in any case that, at the beginning of the Carolingian era, there circulated a large number of exemplars of the *Histories*, and that, in the great historiographic push of the age, there were frequent copies that, unlike the B family, were always in a corpus with other historical works. An example of this is C3 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 9765), which includes a copy of Fredegar. Its *Histories* are formed of the debris – gatherings or fragments of gatherings – of three earlier manuscripts, one from

the end of the 9th century, another from the 9th–10th centuries, the third from the 10th–11th. Passages that could not be used from one or other of these earlier manuscripts in their present state were filled out at Echternach or Reims. Subsequently, C3 was collated and has indications of the chapter lacunae. The three manuscripts from which the fragments were drawn would have completely disappeared, like dozens of others, but for this piecing together. There exist a certain number of C-type fragments, some of Tours origin, others coming rather from eastern France or western Germany. It goes without saying that a composite like C3, when reduced to readings in a critical apparatus, can seem only erratic. Similarly, C4 (Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque municipale 706), from Saint-Bertin, in the 10th century, is a compilation in which the *Histories* are energetically interpolated with the *Liber historiae Francorum*, as part of a complete historical collection, including contemporary annals (*Annales Bertiniani*, the continuation of the *Annales regni Francorum*).

From the prototype that lacks 4.25–26, and from which C2 proceeds, also derive some fifteen more or less complete manuscripts, all from the Capetian area, from the 10th to the 15th centuries. This is the D family, in which the work acquires the title *Historia Francorum*. The general preface and the conclusion of *Hist*. 10.31 are omitted; and almost all the exemplars (except D8, contaminated by a B branch witness) have the same gap (4.30–43). These traits show their almost certain common origin. D manuscripts are often joined to historical texts (Ado of Vienne, Baldric of Bourgueil). Some are lost but were used by editors of the 16th–18th centuries. Even more than the C manuscripts, the D ones are corrected for language, and corrupted and contaminated by the succession of copies. Only the simplification of the beginning and the end seems deliberate, aiming to eliminate, on the one hand, an outdated lamentation of the decay of letters and, on the other hand, personal and Touraine-based considerations. The rest of the text is copied rather mechanically, without interference apart from predictable degradations. Nevertheless, the abundance of copies in French lands reflects the growing prestige of Bishop Gregory's account of 'the history of the Franks'. Although Aimoin, toward the year 1000, uses him with some doubt, citing "the chronicle of Gregory who is thought to be bishop of Tours,"[16] Fulbert of Chartres in 1027 esteems him "for the authoritativeness of his religion."

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16   "Verum in chronica que dicitur Gregorii et putatur esse Turonensis episcopi, refertur quod…Sed quia codex in quo hec digesta invenimus vitio scriptorum erat depravatus, ad liquidum investigare nequivimus cujus gentis [Alaricus] rex fuerit vel que justa necis ejus causa extiterit, tantummodo narrat regnum ejus opesque a Chlodoveo pervasas (But in the chronicle said to be of Gregory, which is attributed to a bishop of Tours, it is reported

It is apparent therefore that, though the manuscripts are numerous, the problems are tangled. Though new codicological discoveries advance our knowledge of this or that witness, and thus the conditions of copying and circulation,[17] the assessment of the witnesses is beyond this an ecdotic problem involving textual criticism and the editing of text. The facts must be handled seriatim in order to gain reliability, and yet each point of the text has to be established according to the spectrum of the existing readings and criticized in itself. The witnesses must meet the different needs of the historian of texts, of the historian of the 6th century, of the hagiographer, or of the linguist (whether Romance, Latinist, or sociolinguistic).

To give an example: in the preface to *VM* 1, Krusch's text, p. 136 line 11, offers "per meae linguae ista proferre," with a single witness adding "officium." Max Bonnet proposed a reading with a more satisfactory sense from MS 14b, a Martinellus in Visigothic script not used by Krusch: "per meae linguae sterilitatem ista."[18] He also explains in the next book (p. 171, line 31) another *per* followed by the genitive by supposing a word has fallen out. Now, two cases begin to be a series: if one looks upon these two cases as Gregory's original text, then the bishop would have twice overlooked *per* followed by a genitive, with the implication that perhaps the first books about St Martin, in which faulty cases are quite frequent, were never seriously proofed (Bonnet saw them as characteristic of a novice author). But if they were copyists' errors, to be corrected, linguists should not take them into account for Gregory's language. Every case of this kind can twist a linguistic analysis.

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that…But since the manuscript in which we have found this was corrupted by the copyists' fault, we have not been able to establish clearly of which people he [Alaric] was king and what was the precise cause of his death; it relates only that Clovis seized his kingdom and his goods") – Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 5925, fol. 15v–16, referring to *Hist.* 2.37. It is not certain that the manuscript was at fault. On Aimoin's method, perceptible in this case, see P. Bourgain, "Clovis et Clotilde chez les historiens médiévaux des temps mérovingiens aux premiers siècles capétiens," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 154 (1996), 53–85.

17   On C2* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 5922), add the note of Matthias Tischler in his review of the edition of Liutprand of Cremona by Paolo Chiesa, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 93 (2000), 192. Helmut Reimitz ("Social networks and identities," cited n. 15) works on all the C manuscripts, showing the work of compilation and recombination of historiographic assemblages at work in these copies (lecture given on November 8, 2007, at the Institut historique allemand of Paris, on the Carolingian 'editions' of the *Historiae*). Cf. below, ch. 15.

18   Max Bonnet, *Le latin de Grégoire de Tours* (Paris, 1890), 527 n. 2.

The mass of variants is boundless, and even electronic processing will give results only in keeping with the manner in which questions are put to the computer. Automatic processing always stumbles over the relative importance of the types of variants, and classification hinges, even unconsciously, on the training and the expectations of whoever establishes it.

One might imagine that for each work the archetype of the tradition could be reconstituted in accordance with the readings of its descendants (and this is not necessarily possible for all the thousands of variants collected, but only for a part of them). But even so there will always remain the unending problem of the relationship between this archetype and Gregory's original. The original and the archetype can be the same copy or be distanced in time and possibly separated by intermediary copies. What are identified as faults of the archetype not attributable to the author lead to the conclusion that the original and the archetype are different. In this case, reconstructionist editors correct, confident in the intention of an author who is supposed to have wished to have a correct text of his work. Other editors hesitate to propose to readers, who are perhaps heedless of critical apparatuses, a text that is not attested by any document and would turn out be for this reason as arbitrary as that of a unique manuscript. Now, this difference of opinion, often an occasion for controversies in textual criticism, is crucial in the case of Gregory of Tours. What might possibly be reconstituted is the text of the prototype of each 'family' of the *Histories*, together with hypotheses on the way in which this prototype derives from the archetype of the tradition, presumably a manuscript from Gregory's time. One could proceed with this reconstruction, following criteria that can only beg the question (namely, in accordance with what each editor believes to be the language of the 6th century, based on what is otherwise known of it), but then linguists could no longer make use of Gregory's work because it would lack the support in the witnesses. Linguists could study the manuscripts one by one and draw from them information on the language of the late 7th or the 8th century; or even, they might better understand the degree of recomposition of the Carolingian language by studying the oldest witnesses of the hagiographic manuscripts, which certainly have correction but leave traces of their model (certain orthographic variants were embarrassing as early as the 9th century, but others would seem so only in the 11th or even later). But the language of the most prolific author of the late 6th century is no longer directly accessible to modern readers. Historians, on the other hand, could more easily make use of a reconstructed edition of the type mentioned above – provided they recall that, where there are no Merovingian manuscripts, what they are reading could be text soundly understood and restored *ex ingenio* by the Carolingian copyist or a passage badly understood and thus falsely

reconstructed. Comparison with passages where there are Merovingian witnesses shows that the latter possibility is far from being out of the question. The tradition of a multitude of pre-12th-century texts that continued to be copied shows the energetic correction of many corrupt or unclear passages that afterwards looked right and offered an impeccable sense – but a false one.

The text of Gregory becomes discernible in copies that, in the case of the fragments of A2, are about fifty years later than the original, or in the case of the B family of the *Histories*, are about a century later than the original, in a period of rapid linguistic evolution. It then appears in manuscripts contemporary to the Carolingian reform, where, in the midst of corrections and misunderstanding, there remain traces of the form of the text from the preceding age – these are the A and C families of the *Histories* (to the extent that the C family is homogeneous and merits this name). To the Carolingian period also belong the oldest manuscripts of the hagiographic works. Next are the Capetian-age manuscripts, corrected according to the norms of the 11th and 12th century and even later, in which original readings can only distantly emerge. The age of the manuscripts joins with the evolution of the texts to obscure the tradition.

In these circumstances, the entanglement of text and language problems are particularly close. The spellings, and the state of the tradition, render certain passages obscure enough that the use made of them – on the level of linguistics, to be sure, but also of semantics – do not cease to be problematic, so that critics are not always in agreement about interpreting certain passages.[19] One might object that this is true of many ancient texts; but in the case of Gregory of Tours the lack of certainty of the textual tradition is worsened by the fact that, for this period of linguistic transition in which evolving features coexist with old forms, we lack certitudes about the criteria for assessing the correctness of the text.

Linguists study language as it is proposed by the text editors, who when in doubt rely on the conclusions of the linguists – a vicious circle that creates the necessity of proceeding by a continuing process of fine tuning. The extreme dispersal of readings in the most trustworthy manuscripts renders all the weightier the obligation to deal with each of the classes of data as a whole. For the same linguistic fact, the witnesses sometimes present few or no variants,

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19   Some examples, among others: on *Hist.* 2.7, P. Courcelle, "Une teichoscopie chez Grégoire de Tours," *Revue des études latines*, 47 bis (1969), 209–213; on *Hist.* 2.31, Bengt Löfstedt, "Zu Gregorius Turonensis *Hist. Franc.* 2, 31," *Acta classica* 21 (1978), 159; Owen Chadwick, "Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great," *Journal of Theological Studies* 50 (1949), 38–49, who thinks that 10.1 is perhaps interpolated.

whereas in other such cases, if a rich panorama of variants is available, all options are possible: either to emend in keeping with the most correct readings, or to favour the oldest witnesses or the 'evolved' ones, or indeed to weigh each case in accord with the logic and norms of a stemmatic method that, alas, here proves rather disappointing. As a result, a study of the language must not stint in paying precise attention to the critical apparatus.

In general, every text edition proceeds in a to-and-fro fashion. It establishes the firm portions of the text, then compares to them those that remain doubtful. One thus establishes the text in keeping with the manuscripts, and this allows the discernment of permanent traits characterizing the author's language. These permanent traits serve as a test for pondering doubtful passages. The circularity of reasoning is open to criticism, as in the case of stemmas of the tradition, which are conjectures about manuscript transmission that allow a text to be reconstructed. Yet this is the only way to go, because it proceeds from the certain and known toward the likely, the probable, and ultimately to the conjectural. But in Gregory's case the conditions in which the text was redacted still muddle analysis of the data provided by the manuscripts.

In view of the circumstances of redaction in Late Antiquity, it is possible that the text of Gregory's *Histories* was never autograph, at least in the state of its final copying. In view of this, to seek to recover the author's *ipsissima verba*, down to spelling, makes little sense. What would he have corrected in the version of his secretaries, if he had the time and the desire to do so? To be sure, he asks at the end of the *Histories* that his work not be changed; he therefore attached a definite importance at least to the content. Nevertheless, it would be absurd to believe that this bishop, without pretence to the title of grammarian, would have been stricter and more coherent than Isidore of Seville, whose orthographic and grammatical canon, despite his pretensions, can be shown to be far from the norms that we consider correct. Down to the 17th century and even later, the authors who worked with secretaries left to them the responsibility for these details (in France, we have the example of Montesquieu, whose author's manuscripts are only two percent autograph). Orthographic precision did not become a quality expected of men of letters until the 19th century.

The first editors, notably Dom Ruinart, corrected energetically in keeping with what they understood of the few manuscripts that they had collated. The MGH editors, Arndt and then especially Bruno Krusch, undertook to mine the oldest witnesses. They have been reproached since then for having favoured this approach to the extent of giving preference, whenever they could, to the most 'evolved' spellings, and thus of having established a shifting, erratic text in keeping with the readings of the oldest manuscripts. The text they established has perhaps the general look of the prototype of the B-family, but not – and

they did not hope for this– its precise readings all through the text, because their text depends on the way in which the oldest copyists are spread over each of the readings. As for the hagiographic works, for which Krusch basically used four witnesses, he favoured the spellings of the oldest ones, of the 9th century, which he noted were less corrected than the others.

His reasoning on the latter point can be defended to the extent that there were evidently fewer copies of the complete hagiographic works between Gregory's time and the Carolingian Renaissance in comparison with the *Histories*, as launched by its Merovingian editor. Only one fragment remains of a Merovingian hagiographic manuscript of Gregory, making it likely that there were fewer intermediaries between the archetype or original of the *Libri miraculorum* than of the *Histories*. As we have seen, only extracts circulated in the hagiographic works now being formed, notably concerned with Saint Martin, and their success makes them an unpropitious terrain for linguistic study because of multiple copies and contaminations. Copies of the hagiographic works, which multiplied in the Carolingian era, were soon rendered unusable for linguistic purposes and are unreliable even for contents, like the Capetian D-family of the *Histories*.

The latest editor who has set himself to untangling the confusion of the tradition of the *Histories* is Kai P. Hilchenbach – just for Book 4.[20] He posits with some likelihood an archetype dating from around the year 600, a little after the bishop's death, which may explain certain signs of incoherences or lack of finality. This archetype surely also had a share in the grammatical slips that are encountered in its descendants. Some result from the redaction, such as cases of anacoluthon that cannot be explained by a careless copy, or examples of syntactical missteps. These flaws inevitably come from Gregory. The appearance of its spelling would have been an indirect reflection of the pronunciation of either the bishop himself or of the copyists, along with the memory of learned norms. But one cannot be certain of what the archetype contained unless the traces of 'evolved' forms, badly understood by late copyists and clumsily corrected, appear in several branches of the tradition. In most cases, however, one cannot rely on the stemmatic method to establish the linguistic aspect of the archetype.

Though Hilchenbach unfortunately adopts new sigla, he does so deliberately, for previous ones, used since the MGH edition, in his view inaccurately reflect the groupings of the textual transmission. The general construction he proposes,

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20   Kai Peter Hilchenbach, ed., *Das vierte Buch der Historien von Gregor von Tours: Edition mit sprachwissenschaftlich-textkritischem und historischem Kommentar*, Teil 1–2, Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 42 (Bern/Berlin/Brüssels, 2009).

in fact, takes better account of what has already appeared in the latest studies on the manuscript tradition. Thus, in Hilchenbach's scheme, the archetype (Ω) soon had the two main branches, α and ψ. The first of them, α, is the basis not only of the abridged manuscripts of Krusch's B-family (his β branch), but also of Krusch's C1 (Hilchenbach's H, which he regards as also dependent on the ψ branch), of A1 (Hilchenbach's M, a Montecassino manuscript), and finally of b (Krusch's D8), a very late and contaminated witness, which in fact forms part of Krusch's B-family. The second of Hilchenbach's branches, ψ, is represented by the Namur manuscript (Krusch's C2) and by a sub-class he calls φ (which produces Krusch's D-family). Hilchenbach thus falls back on a two-branch stemma, which would have given Joseph Bédier support in his views.[21] The revision allows Hilchenbach to edit avoiding Merovingian spellings, as soon as one of his basic manuscripts shows the form demanded by grammar.[22]

This new stemma obviously suggests that Krusch's two main manuscripts forming what the MGH editor called the C family cannot be regarded as a single branch. Krusch's C1, according to Hilchenbach, in fact represents a contaminated transmission that depends on the same prototype (α) as both the truncated B manuscripts and the Montecassino manuscript M (Krusch's A1), while drawing from the branch that descends from the other prototype (ψ) that included the Namur manuscript (C2) and the complete manuscripts. All this testifies to the circulation and mixing of numerous witnesses at a relatively early date.

Because Book 4 does not appear in A2 (the fragments of the oldest manuscript we have), Hilchenbach does not give A2 a place in his stemma. These fragments, from the first half of the 7th century, might in Hilchenbach's construction descend directly from the archetype, like the prototypes α and ψ. Indeed, A2, for the few chapters it transmits, occupies an intermediary position; in other words, if it were complete it would permit a decision between the two proposed branches, provided its own errors were taken into account.

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21   Concerning the edition of texts in Old French, Joseph Bédier contested the stemmatic method of the editors of his time, stressing that they almost automatically culminated in stemmas with two branches, which seemed impossible to him. His criticisms led to the division into two schools that have not yet been reconciled, the Bédiéristes and the reconstructionists or Lachmannians. See Joseph Bédier, *La tradition manuscrite du Lai de l'Ombre, réflexions sur l'art d'éditer les anciens textes* (Paris, 1929), offprint of *Romania* 54 1(1928), 161–196 and 321–356.

22   See, for example, 4.21 (ed. Hilchenbach line 9, 125), where it seems evident to me that the *agebat* attested by M/A1 as well as by H/C1 in first reading before correction had to be the reading of α, but it is not found in N/C2, from which Hilchenbach concludes that it was not in ψ. In fact we cannot know this in view of the date of the representatives of ψ.

This new attempt at an edition shows – as noted already by Giovanni Orlandi – that in this case everything cannot be expected of the stemmatic method.[23] Nevertheless, Hilchenbach's conclusions are weakened by the fact that spellings of 'evolved' Latin are placed on the same level as true faults: certain lists of conjunctive 'errors' (intended to show a link between manuscripts) are weak, because expected or reversible. By the same token, variants proving that manuscript M (Krusch A1) did not understand a Merovingian form, and these are extremely frequent, are drowned in lists of insignificant variants.[24]

In any case, Hilchenbach implements what is the general consensus of recent research. If one cannot really fault the collations of the MGH edition, Bruno Krusch nevertheless favoured excessively the readings of the Cambrai manuscript (B1) in all the cases where the stemma did not prevent him from choosing them. His edition – a very Merovingian one wherever the truncated B family exists, but much more normative when there exist only late witnesses – can therefore be lightly smoothed by adopting 'evolved'-type readings only when a degree of agreement appears, including that perceptible in (faulty) corrections of the late manuscripts.

This is what K. P. Hilchenbach does. He does not favour the B class of truncated manuscripts but bases himself on the available witnesses so as not to reconstruct an arbitrary text. Doing so obliges him to accept in part some incoherences in spelling – and again, it is worth noting, nothing proves that the original or the archetype was totally flawless in this matter. The study of works of the Visigothic period and original Frankish documents makes one seriously doubt that complete consistency was the case with Gregory either.

The spelling of Gregory of Tours is therefore no longer within our grasp, at least in all its details. Only certain variants allow one to arrive at proof of what was contained in the archetype (and not the original, even if they were perhaps not very different, being rather close to each other in time).

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23 Giovanni Orlandi, "Un dilemma editoriale: ortografia e morfologia nelle Historie di Gregorio di Tours," *Filologia mediolatina* 3 (1996), 37–71.

24 The A1 Montecassino MS wrongly corrects several times per page, and these corrections prove that its model, α (from which also proceed the truncated manuscripts and C1), was more Merovingian than Hilchenbach tends to acknowledge. This results from an error in method: to make up the numbers, he aligns real errors with Merovingian spellings, even though the latter do not have the same relevance (e.g. Hilchenbach, 51, where the only truly cogent variant is *Hist.* 4.42 *per Niceum/perniciem*). He therefore does not bring out the readings that prove that α was in Merovingian spelling, e.g. Hilchenbach, 35, *Hist.* 4.21, *aiebat/agebat*. And his conclusion on 36 that these errors must not be imputed to α is excessive. Some come not from the β branch of the truncated manuscripts, but already from α.

And so, though numerous and spread out in time, the manuscripts of Gregory cannot answer all the questions that historians and linguists pose about them. They are, however, in their diversity one of the better examples of the fundamental character of the transmission of texts for use in historical and linguistic analysis.

What still needs to be considered is sentence structure, word order, and syntax.

5.2   Language

Gregory's work, coming as it does between the language of the Fathers of the Church and the reformed Latin of the Carolingian Renaissance, bears witness not just to the literary personality of the author but also to the state of the language of his time.

What makes the linguistic reliability of the manuscripts a thorny question is that no other author has spoken so often of his linguistic shortcomings as Gregory. This may lead us to suppose that there is at work here more than the customary modesty topos, as found, for example, in Sulpicius Severus and Gregory the Great.[25]

Our difficulty in understanding what Gregory wants to say – and would have us understand – in his prefaces increases rather than diminishes the more the complexity of the linguistic problem of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages is understood.[26] Critics tirelessly comment upon his prefaces and pro- logues seeking to pierce their secret, to define the meaning of words at the time Gregory lived, and to weigh the role of self-defence and the more or less ironic use of the modesty topos.[27]

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25   See Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in literary conventions* (Stockolm/Uppsala, 1964).

26   See Roman Müller, *Sprachbewusstsein und Sprachvariation im lateinische Schriften der Antike* (München 2001), with a vast bibliography bringing together all the occurrences of language concepts at different levels in late ancient authors.

27   See H. Beumann, "Gregor von Tours und der *sermo rusticus*," in *Spiegel der Geschichte: Festgabe für Max Braubach,* (eds.) K. Repgen and S. Skalweit (Münster, 1964), 69–98; more generally, Manfred Bambeck, "Fischer und Bauern gegen Philosophen – ein christlicher Topos in Antike und Mittelalter," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 18 (1983), 2–50; Martin Heinzelmann, "Histoires, rois et prophètes, Le rôle des éléments autobiographiques dans les *Histoires* de Grégoire de Tours: Un guide épiscopal à l'usage du roi chrétien," in *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes: Mélanges J. Fontaine* (Paris 1992), 1: 537–550, esp. 543–544; A.H.B. Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul: The* Histories *of Gregor of Tours Interpreted in their Historical Context* (Göttingen, 1994), espe- cially the chapter "Elocutio: Styling the Material," 311–337, which concludes no doubt

The pretended or advertised rusticity of Gregory's language is presented with little difference between the *Histories*, in which *rusticus* is always pejorative or at least neutral, and the hagiographic works. In the latter context, in view of the grandeur of the subject, an author can only ever consider himself inadequate, rustic as it were, whereas his mother, according to the prologue to *VM* 1, has him realize that his manner of expression is, as far as ordinary people are concerned, *magis praeclarum*, clearer and even brilliant. Meanwhile, according to the traditional contention of Christian literature, divine simplicity, which has made itself known to simple sinners, is foreign to the refinements of learned men. The prologue of the *Liber in gloria confessorum* brings Gregory up against the criticism of litterati; he has himself handle their precise, if insultingly excessive criticisms of grammatical incompetence in order to then silence them. For he will not accept correction or abbreviation of his original text, as he clearly says at the end of the *Histories*; he can contemplate only a transposition into verse, that is modification of the elements of his work that belong to its *ornatus* and do not bear on its substance. He thus has an assured confidence in his own production, because he has chosen a way of writing appropriate to a sacred message.

He was not the first to recognize in himself faults of good usage: Sulpicius Severus, the authors of the *Vita Caesarii Arelatensis*, and Gregory the Great did so too. So it was a tradition, if not a topos, in this age. To be too finicky about literary quality was a temptation against which Christians had to defend themselves, for the message is superior to the form, as is shown by the dream of St Jerome (*Ep.* 22, 30). The ostentatious rejection of pagan subjects in the prologue of the *Liber in gloria martyrum* is an example of 'mention by not mentioning' (*praeteritio*), a topos at home in introductions that Gregory would have already appreciated in Sulpicius Severus, where Sulpicius prepared to speak of Saint Martin of Tours. The topos appears frequently among medieval commonplaces.

Much has been said about Gregory's intentional use of vertical communication.[28] This may explain a certain number of language traits in his work (parataxis, the invasion of new turns of phrase in morphology), but not all of them. It is

rightly that Gregory has no doubts about his own style and that *rusticitas* is a virtue, 'humble' language showing true devotion; József Herman, "La conscience linguistique de Grégoire de Tours," in *Latin vulgaire-latin tardif V,* (eds.) H. Petersmann & R. Kettemann (Heidelberg1999), 31–39; Claude Carozzi, "Grégoire de Tours historien ?" in *Faire l'événement au Moyen Age,* (eds.) Claude Carozzi et al. (Aix-en-Provence, 2007), 201–217. There is also an excellent study s.v. Gregory by Benedikt Vollmann in the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 12, under "Sprache und Stil," cols 921–928.

28   Antonio De Prisco, "Gregorio di Tours agiografo e la communicazione verticale nella Gallia del VI. secolo," in *Le origini del linguaggio*, (ed.) C. Milani (Verona, 1999), 1–14, believes that vertical communication does not fit very well in the 6th century, because Gregory is

probable that most characteristics that place him in the evolutionary continuity of Latin are unconscious. Furthermore, his espousal of simpler language does not at all prevent him from caring for his diction. One finds in him careful pages (the prefaces and accounts that he holds dear), poetic words and turns of phrase, and artful modes of persuasion, some of them already urged by ancient rhetoric. In undeniably select passages, quite far from the *sermo piscatorius* (or the 'style of the apostles') he aims at a quality that can be appreciated only at a certain level of cultivation. It is not certain that his modesty is real.

In fact, as the study of Gregory's sources shows, he was cultivated and knew many more authors than those that he overtly cites. In keeping with the topos of rejecting vain and pagan literature, he cites classical authors in order to reject them, but he in fact knew them well. His lexicon is notably burdened with Greek words. Perhaps he wrote little verse (Venantius Fortunatus congratulates him on a composition of his in tragic style that is lost), but he owned a treatise on versification and read Vergil widely.[29] He compiled an anthology of Christian poets, borrowed from him by Venantius Fortunatus.[30] Chilperic's rhythmical poems arouse only his scorn, for he implicitly appeals to metrical poetry, the only kind in Roman high culture. And, in keeping with the episode of those who mocked the bad pronunciation of a cleric substituting for Gregory (*VM* 2.1), it appears that Gregory himself and his flatterers considered his own pronunciation correct and refined – only in a later phase does he get passed this reaction, as does Gregory the Great with respect to Donatus' language. He rewrote the miracles of Saint Andrew, which were too verbose to his taste. Although he appreciated the elegant writings and poems of his friend and protégé Venantius Fortunatus, he would doubtless have disliked the mannerism of an Ennodius of Pavia, which in any case was not in keeping with what he would choose. He opposes the *verbositas* of the late ancient obscure style.[31] But his rewriting in prose of passages from

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forced to pass from the *stylus humilis* (the simple level of ancient rhetorical style) to the *stylus rusticus* (that accessible to country folk).

29   Jean Meyers, "Les citations et réminiscences virgiliennes dans les *Libri historiarum* de Grégoire de Tours," *Pallas* 41 (1994), 67–90. On Gregory's sources, see in general Massimo Oldoni, "Gregorio di Tours e i *Libri Historiarum*: Letture e fonti, metodi e ragioni," *Studi medievali*, series 3a, 13 (1972), 563–701, somewhat abridged in "Gregorio di Tours e i *Libri historiarum*: le fonti scritte," in *Gregorio di Tours* (Todi 1977), 253–324, and in the preface to his translation (Nuovo medio evo, 55).

30   Fortunatus, *Carmen* 5.8b, (ed.) Marc Reydellet (Paris 1994), vol. 2: 173, n. 107.

31   See F. Thürlemann, *Der historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours: Topoi und Wirklichkeit* (Bern Frankfort, 1974), notably the chapter "Geschichtsschreibung als Paraphrase," which brings together the examples of Gregory's scorn for uneducated people together with his denial of *verbositas*.

the poems of Prudentius, Paulinus of Nola, Paulinus of Périgueux, or Fortunatus show, that regardless of what he says of his training, he doubtless was acquainted with the exercises (*progymnasmata*) of turning prose into verse, and vice versa, of ancient literary training. Therefore his insistence on underscoring his weak cultivation amounts not only to proving that it was not contemptible, as affected modesty was the fashion of the day, but also to underscoring no doubt that his stylistic choice was well thought out and deliberate.

It is one thing, however, to rank among the cultivated men of his age and another to write exactly as a few centuries before. Gregory's is a language that has evolved. Putting aside what is only spelling, and attributable to scribes, one may find in his language just about all the traits that the studies of late and Merovingian Latin have discerned. No traits of his, or very few, are not found elsewhere; only the proportions change. Yet there is insistence on Gregory's vulgarisms, although some are no different from Einhard's or other Carolingian authors: they are the ones that the reading of the Fathers and ancient Latin bibles inscribed in memories. This impregnation by reading had, it seems to me, as much impact on Gregory's language as the spoken language of the period – perhaps even more impact – provided one focuses on syntax and leaves aside phonetics and its consequences in morphology.

We understand rather well what goes in a straight line of evolution from Latin toward the Romance language, but somewhat less well what changed without having any evident future, and which can sometimes be partially illuminated by the evolution of post-Carolingian language, as I shall try to show with regard to a few points. Recent studies on the continuum of Merovingian to Carolingian Latinity show that, in spite of surface facts (morphology), which can seem as though taken in hand in the Carolingian period, the syntactic traits that structure language usage continue to evolve in this period, at least in charter evidence.[32] As a result, the tendencies perceptible in Gregory can be better restored to the temporal line of this evolution and be clarified by it.

The study of Max Bonnet on the language of Gregory of Tours remains the only systematic and complete monograph on the subject, precious because of its enumerations and by the method with which he took account of probabilities in the variant readings of the manuscripts.[33] Obviously, a century of work

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32 Rémy Verdo, *La reconfiguration du latin mérovingien sous les Carolingiens*, in Ecole nationale des chartes. Positions des thèses soutenues…pour le diplôme d'archiviste paléographe (Paris, 2010), 257–265.

33 Max Bonnet, *Le latin de Grégoire de Tours*. Kai Hilchenbach's study of Book 4 (cited n. 20) is impressive, but it is laid out in text order and without an index, so does not allow a systematic overview.

on late Latinity and Merovingian language permits modification of some of his conclusions, but if one replaces 'decadent' by 'evolved', without demanding an updated terminology, and if one makes the most of the lists of facts he gathers, and his analyses, without taking account of his judgments, one may still work the mine that his monograph represents.

For example, Bonnet rightly noticed that, in the case when two constructions are possible in Latin, and when classical authors had grounds for deciding one way or the other, Gregory does not seem to have had reasons for his choice but picks haphazardly, including using the two turns of phrase side by side.[34] This is characteristic of transitional states, when two formulas rival each other in usage, one losing speed, the other destined to prevail, as sociolinguistics has shown in recent years.[35]

We will not reconsider here matters of spelling or of the use of cases and genders, which are the only type of error that Gregory attributes to himself. We pay even less attention to pronunciation, except for the fact that research in the rhymed prose that he sometimes practices shows that, at least before pauses, he supposes that final vowels, which were weakening in the spoken language, are pronounced. According to J. Herman, he is in any case worse in verbal morphology and syntax than in the use of cases, for it does not seem that he confuses cases, but sometimes their use with prepositions that may govern two different cases.[36]

As concerns Gregory's lexicon, R. Maltby finds in him 61 words attested for the first time, of which 12 are diminutives.[37] His study shows that the neologisms are Latin suffixes or prefixes, sometimes used differently from the classical age; but, in certain cases, this difference can be the result of a supplementary quest for expressiveness or of a need to distinguish the new sense taken by a root (thus *temporive* instead of *tempestative*, for *tempestas* is more and more used in the sense of 'tempest'). On the whole, Gregory is quite moderate in the

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34   For example, with regard to the reflective and the demonstrative, ibid. 695.

35   See Michel Banniard, *Viva voce: Communication écrite et communication orale du IVe au IXe siècle en occident latin* (Paris, 1991), and more precisely "Niveaux de langue et communication latinophone (Ve–VIIIe siècle)," in *Comunicare e significare nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 52 (Spoleto, 2005), 1: 155–208.

36   J. Herman, "La conscience linguistique de Grégoire de Tours," (as in n. 27).

37   Robert Maltby, "Neologisms in the Latin of Gregory of Tours," *Archivum latinitatis medii aevi* 63 (2005), 61–69 (but beware his introduction, in which he says that Gregory spoke Latin in a world in which Celtic was still spoken, and Franks spoke Germanic; Celtic was no longer used, and even the ruling Merovingians were bilingual and probably on the way to slipping toward Latin). See previously, M. Le Pennec-Hardy, "Etude de la création lexicale: le verbe. D'après les cinq premiers livres de l'*Histoire des Francs* de Grégoire de Tours," Thèse de latin Paris 4, 1984, résumé in *Année philologique* 57 (1988), 124.

matter of lexical creation, and his prefixes and suffixes are completely Latin, with a predilection for those characteristic of late Latin, notably in the prefixation of verbs; moreover, new suffixes exist for the same root alongside ancient ones. Carolingian copyists sometimes restore the form of the prefix or suffix which won out. The sense of words also slides: the word *hostis* already has on occasion the medieval sense of army (*Hist.* 2.34, p. 82, line 12–13), for example where the king marches at the head of his troops, *catervae hostium*, and *pagensis* takes the medieval sense of 'pagan'. None of this announces a rout, nor a deliberate and sought out creativity.

For syntax, the analyses of Max Bonnet remain in very large part applicable. The subjunctive remains perfectly alive, and even generalized as the sign of grammatical subordination. It remains used in direct discourse and in indirect interrogative in a very honourable proportion, in spite of the perceptible relaxation of the strict rules of indirect discourse. The final infinitive gains ground under Greek influence passed on by the Christian authors. But it seems that one may refine Bonnet's analyses concerning the constitution of new paradigms of the perfect by the use of auxiliaries:[38] all the examples detected in Gregory are in the second or third person, thus in direct discourse (*episcopum invitatum habes*, *VP* 3.1; *promissum habemus* + infinitive, *Hist.* 9.16; *diaconem…habeo destinatum*, *VP* 6.3). Now, the examples of this difference between the written text and direct discourse is encountered on several occasions and are part of a stylistic inflexion to which we shall return. Through the use of vividness or reminiscence intended to give an impression of real life, Gregory's language is not at all the same when he reports or reconstitutes direct discourse. It is there that the traces of 'evolved' language that will remain in the Romance language are most evident (such as the use of *quia* + indicative after declarative verbs).

As concerns the use of cases, the increase in the use of the genitive, and notably of the genitive of quality (observed by Max Bonnet), is a general trait, which, by imitation of the biblical determinative genitives (*crucis vexillo*, *fidei parma*) and of the Hebrew genitive, used as a genitive of quality but without attributive adjective, culminates in a case distribution that is much more favourable to the genitive than in the classical language. This will carry on in medieval Latin, giving the language an insidiously different character.[39]

The ablative tends to be used more often to express duration, but this is an already old fact. And, in ablative absolutes, there is no more restriction in the use of the substantive in the rest of the sentence.

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38   M. Bonnet, *Le latin*, 690.

39   Bonnet, 548–554 and 714–715, for the pleonastic genitive (of the type *spatium amplitudinis, mortis interitu*). And see P. Bourgain, "Le génitif d'interprétation en latin médiéval," *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 17 (2007 [2009]), 300–312.

The study of Paolo Greco on participial clauses and that of E. Tarrino Ruiz allow this phenomenon to be better assessed.[40] Ablative absolutes – whether the participle is in the past tense or, much more often than formerly, in the present (40% of the cases) – serve to distinguish successive moments of the action and can be placed almost anywhere in the sentence.

When there is divergence between the cases, almost always the substantive is in the accusative and the participle in the ablative, of the type *Quod audito*, and it is in this form, as it happens, that certain formulas survive, as a result of a sort of confusion of the active and passive, with the subject, unexpressed, generally being that of the main clause. The syntagma is interpreted as an active participle qualifying the subject, 'hearing that', which makes the subject of the passive participle remain in the case of the object of the active participle, the accusative, because it is in fact felt to be the object.

In reality, the traditional distinction between coordination and subordination loses its importance.[41] The functional ties are more semantic than syntactic. Gregory structures his text by participles. Participial subordination becomes central, in fact, to the manner of constructing sentences. Qualifying or absolute participles (two less and less distinct formulas) represent more effective means of building a narrative period.

Without its being of enormous importance, let us note that accusative absolutes[42] can be simple complements of a direct object furnished with a participle. The only difference is that they may be or not separated from the main clause by a comma, which is the editor's responsibility. From this standpoint, all of medieval Latinity is stuffed with accusative absolutes completely similar to those of Gregory of Tours, placed before the main verb because they indicate an action previous (past participle) to that of this verb.[43]

What must be underscored is that the complex narrative sentence always places the different pieces of information in chronological order.[44] The sequel

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40   Paolo Greco, "La subordinazione participiale nel primo libro della *Historia Francorum* di Gregorio di Tours," *Medioevo romanzo*, 29 (2005), 3–71 and 161–210. Eusebia Tarrino Ruiz, "La evolucion del ablativo absoluto en Gregorio de Tours," in *Actas del III Congreso Hispanico de latin medieval* (*Leon, sept. 2001*), (*ed.*) M. Perez Gonzalez (Leon, 2002), 697–705.

41   Greco, "La subordinazione," 184.

42   Ibid., 32.

43   It may be noted that the use of participles is exactly the same in Ademar of Chabannes in the 11th century (see P. Bourgain, "La *compositio* et l'équilibre de la phrase latine au onzième siècle," in *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century*, (eds.) Michael W. Herren, C.J. McDonough, Ross G. Arthur (Turnhout, 2002), 1: 83–108, here 89 and 90.

44   Which is noted for that matter by P. Greco, "La subordinazione," 16.

of participles and possibly other adverbial modifiers are always worded in the order of the events. That limits somewhat the possibility of playing with the word order, but it helps to sort out the sense. Now, the Latin of the following centuries will not react any differently and will make sure to place actions in chronological order, which justifies the order of the syntagmata (*equum emptum in stabulum misit*, one buys the horse before putting it in the stable: the object would never be placed after the verb). Most complex sentences, and those Greco considers to be difficult to interpret, tend to clear up if they are considered in this way.

For example a case that he considers difficult[45] is clarified, in this instance, not by the chronological thread guiding the order of syntagmata, but by the tendency of the narration to parallelism. The passage in question brings together the disappearances of Jesus from his tomb and of Joseph of Arimathea from his prison (*Hist.* 1.21, p. 18, lines 3–9), combining the Gospels and the *Acta Pilati*, no doubt because the two events they relate were considered to be virtually concomitant. In a sentence that begins by recalling the Resurrection in three segments ("Sed resurgente Domino, custodibus visione angelica territis, cum non inveniretur in tumulo"), Gregory immediately passes to the subject of Joseph without even a demonstrative ("nocte parietes de cellola in qua Ioseph tenebatur suspenduntur sublimi"). The key is in last clause of the previous sentence where *hic* (Christ) and *ille* (Joseph) are its subjects, and this pairing sets the ground for the passage just quoted. The ablative absolute about Christ in the first segment and the main clause on the raising up of the walls of Joseph's cell, simply continue the parallelism, on which, in the conclusion of the story, Christ's guards will base their defence that they have done no worse than the high priests themselves in guarding Joseph.

And so, present participles can signify an action previous and not concomitant with the principal verb that follows them. The active or passive sense of a participle, when Gregory does not confuse it, determines the use of the present or the past. This reinforces the analyses of Max Bonnet on the confusion of the active and the passive or reflective.[46] The fact that Latin has only an active present participle and a passive past explains in part the cases of apparent confusion of voice, more frequent in the participle.

Another shift, which can hereafter be compared to the general evolution, is that of the replacement of infinitive clauses with noun clauses with *ut* or *quod*.

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45   Ibid., 48–51.
46   M. Bonnet, *Le latin*, 628–633.

Another study by Paolo Greco, concerning Books 1 and 4 of the *Histories*,[47] leads to a demonstration that, although infinitives remain in the majority with declaratory verbs and the like, noun clauses most often find their place after the introductory verb, as is normal, and that those that are introduced by *quod* are preferably in the subjunctive, and those introduced by *quia* preferably in the indicative, a circumstance that is doubtless tied to the fact that this last type appears especially in direct or semi-direct discourse (as when *quia* follows *dicens* etc.). This preference for *quia* in direct discourse and with the indicative can be traced back to Petronius and forward to the *Chronicon Salernitanum.* It therefore corresponds to a general evolutionary tendency. Moreover, *quia*, the conjunction of simple and indicative assertion, is very much used by Gregory to introduce biblical citations.

In sum, word order is still very free, less no doubt than in classical Latin, but this relative tightening was already the case in St Augustine. A free word order permits the stylistic effects that we are about to consider. What is involved is not a pre-Romance order, even if that is approached in certain direct discourses. For in a general fashion, except for spelling (which relates to phonetics), the conservative traits of Gregory's language are very conspicuous. One may observe in him all the traits that, in recent research on hagiographic texts of from 50 to 150 years later, show the feeble reception of pre-Romance evolutions.[48]

5.3   Style

Gregory of Tours' style has occasioned very diverse judgments. His vigor, his sensory and expressive energy, were prized by Erich Auerbach.[49] His confusion has often been noted: he has been judged incapable of organizing what he has

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47   Paolo Greco, "*Accusativus cum infinitivo* and *Quod*-Clauses in the First and Sixth Books of the *Historiae* of Gregory of Tours," in *Latin vulgaire et latin tardif VIII: Actes du VIIIe colloque international sur le latin vulgaire et tardif, Oxford 6–9 sept. 2006*, (ed.) Roger Wright (Hildesheim-Zürich-New York, 2008), 371–380. It cites the work of linguists on the state of the question.

48   Marieke van Acker, *Ut quique rustici et inlitterati hec audierint intellegant: hagiographie et communication verticale au temps des mérovingiens, VII–VIIIe siècle,* Lingua Patrum 4 (Turnhout, 2007), esp. 536–537. The exception in Gregory is direct discourse where he shows less repugnance toward the compound past of Romance type than hagiographic texts.

49   Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton 1953); and *Literary Language and its Public in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, 1965), 103–112: "The Bishop of Tours created a literary language with which the colloquial tongue had been fused" (p. 111).

to say as a whole and is thought to have practically cast off the rationality of classical Latin in order to return to archaic spontaneity, to the immediacy of a narrative full of details that are freer and more creative than strategic.[50]

Max Bonnet's rather scornful study of Gregory's style is the weakest part of his work. He begins by insisting on the difficulty of distinguishing between syntax and vocabulary, on the one hand, and style, on the other. This is really a difficulty where emphatic expressivity runs the risk of being interpreted, because of its mode of expression, as a blunder or thoughtlessness. Nevertheless recent research has conducted important reevaluations of his style, especially in respect to his inimitable way of giving sense in an almost implicit manner to readers whom he expects to have perceptual or hermeneutic abilities that we have lost.[51]

5.3.1   *Rhetorical Devices*

It is important to consider in what way stylistic effects are distributed in his work. The impression of strangeness that it can give comes from the coexistence of a down-to-earth narrative tone with rhetorical effects that are sometimes emphatic. These two aspects of Gregory's style mingle in his work *mixte confuseque*, like the actions of the good and the wicked, but each of these aspects has its reason for existence. When stylistic effects make their appearance, it is very rare that one cannot see the reasons Gregory has for emphasizing and embellishing. What are involved are almost always features of the account that he cares deeply about and arouse his emotions. This is why such effects are not found in simple accounts of the course of events.

Max Bonnet considered his use of poetic words and rhetorical effects to be an affectation.[52] These were in fact a trait of artistic prose that had grown since the Augustan period, but one may consider Gregory's immersion in

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50   See Jennifer T. Roberts, "Gregory of Tours and the Monk of Saint-Gall: The Paratactic Style of Medieval Latin," *Latomus* 39 (1980), 173–190, using as example the story of Attalus' flight in *Hist.* 3.15, in which the liveliness of the narrative goes as far as including trivial and even coarse details that give the impression of being taken from real life, but in which Roberts discerns a lack of perspective.

51   See all the works of Giselle De Nie, for example *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower: Studies of Imagination in the Works of Gregory of Tours*, Studies in classical antiquity 7 (Amsterdam, 1987); "Gregory of Tours' Smile: Spiritual Reality, Imagination and Early Events in the Histories," in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna/Munich, 1994), 68–95, and "Images as Mysteries: the Shape of the Invisible," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 9 (1999), 78–90; Joachim Martinez Pizarro, "Images as Texts: the Shape of the Visible in Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 9 (1999), 91–101; and cf. below Ch. 10.

52   Bonnet, *Le latin*, 737 f.

poetry – he was well acquainted with poetry and its rules – as a conscious effort to achieve expressiveness. For example his use of the poetical plural (in solemn direct discourse) has occasioned difficulties of interpretation when the device was not recognized for what it is.[53] In any case, it is probable that medieval prose writers after him who used a poetical lexicon would do so less aware of what they were doing than he was.

The use of abstract words and abstract expression increased considerably in late Latin, and Gregory makes abundant use of them, notably in the form of enallage, the substitution of one grammatical form for another: "cervorum atque luporum feritas portas ingressa" (*Hist.* 2.34),[54] or "duritiam pavimenti" (*Hist.* 4.28).[55] To take only these two cases, one may observe that Gregory places them at spots in the narrative that he wishes to solemnize or dramatize, and which are distinguished by other features, such as close, insistent rhyme.

(1) In the first case, *Hist.* 2.34, the subject is the famine preceding the institution of the Rogations by Saint Mamertus. This passage, inserted in the story of the attempts of St Avitus to convert Gundobad, is a rewriting of a homily of Avitus'.[56] In comparison, Gregory looks like a model of simplicity. But what is worth noting is that, according to Avitus, only deer venture into the town. Gregory, impressed by the grandiloquence of Avitus' passage in speaking of the beasts of the forests, remembered Saint Cyprian, *De unitate ecclesiae* 9: "Quid facit in pectore christianorum luporum feritas, canorum rabies...," in which, it so happens, the use of the abstract term *feritas* is not an enallage. He therefore introduced the wildness of wolves from Cyprian, alongside that of deer, which, Avitus recalls, are generally fearful. So Gregory adds an additional danger that was not in his source: he dramatizes. Within an account of wars and betrayals, related in a relatively flat way, stylistic figures rise up in *Hist.* 2.34 at the point where Avitus starts to exhort Gundobad, which reminds Gregory of his admiration for what Avitus has written and spurs him to offer a rewriting of his sermon on Saint Mamertus. One need only observe the stylistic difference between this chapter (the summary of the miracle gained by the saint and the ceremony of gratitude are entirely rhymed, as we shall see below) and the two

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53   On the poetic plural *depone colla*, see P. Bourgain and M. Heinzelmann, "Courbe-toi, fier Sicambre, adore ce que tu as brûlé: A propos de Grégoire de Tours, *Hist.* ii, 31," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 154 (1996), 591–606.

54   *Hist.* 2.34, 83, line 8. The adjective becomes a noun and the noun, now in the genitive, modifies it. Translations inevitably normalize the grammatical relations.

55   *Hist.* 4.28, 161, line 8.

56   See the comparison of texts in Bonnet, *Le latin*, 64 n. 8.

strictly narrative chapters flanking it, which are treated at a zero degree of style because they concern only kings and wars.

(2) The second case (*Hist.* 4.28) concerns the prodigy that follows the assassination of Galswinth by Chilperic. The solemnity of tone brought about by the enallage figure – noting that the lamp above her tomb fell and miraculously pierced the hard stone of her mortuary – with the preceding rhythm ("suggellari iussit a puero, mortuamque repperit in strato. Post cuius obitum Deus magnam virtutem ostendit...) is the only commentary Gregory offers of the assassination.

Other cases of enallage are not completely automatic. For example, one can see it in an attempt to describe with a kind of precision in *GM* 79 (a platter is decorated "olivarum rotunditatibus," by the round form of olives, which stresses the visual aspect more than a simple statement could manage). Nevertheless, the tendency to utilize abstract terms or turns of phrase, which one can accept as not wholly gratuitous but as markers of emotion, are one of the constituents of Gregory's language.

Likewise, the appearance of alliterations or repetitions is rarely gratuitous. The repetition of a word, sometimes by means of cognates in close proximity (the *figura etymologica*) as in "qualiter virtus beati Martini revelatione revelavit,"[57] a cognate object construction, is a sign of emphasis and a strong expression mirroring biblical turns such as *morte moriens*. Thus "quae ille credidit credam" is a declaration of strong agreement;[58] "quia audax audeo, veniam peto legenti," emphasizes his own authorial awareness of being about to write about his favourite saint;[59] "addit et litteras litteris nostris" is a sign of indignation at the innovating effrontery of Chilperic for adding letters to the alphabet; [60] "ut non liceret fratri fratrem aspicere" is also a way of underscoring his view that the orders of Guntram preventing interviews with Bishop Theodore of Marseilles were abusive; [61] "tantus fetor egrediebatur ut omnium... fetores fetor ille devinceret," when the smell of a sleeping drunkard prevented Gregory himself from entering his church, is likewise an expressive overstatement marking ironic indignation.[62] Alliteration has the same emphasizing effect: "non permisit perire populum suum,"[63] on the Lord's care for orthodox Christians, takes on a biblical appearance; "vidi a basilica sancti Vincenti

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57   *GC* 20, 309, line 12.

58   VM 1.11, 145, line 10.

59   VM 2.40, 173, line 20.

60   *Hist.* 5.44, 254, line 3.

61   *Hist.* 8.12, 378, line 20.

62   *Hist.* 9.6, 419, line 16.

63   GM 94, 102, line 8.

veniente virum" in direct discourse, emphasizes an appearance that will prove premonitory.[64] The totality of these figures, called *annominatio*, which embrace paranomasia (punning) and the repetition of the same root, would delight medieval *artes poeticae* and should be taken not as incompetence but as a sign of the evolution of aesthetic sense.

Most of these traits were already present in late Latin and would be perpetuated in medieval Latin: the use of abstract words, which comes from the administrative usage of the Empire and from patristic style; the difficulty in distinguishing poetic from normal vocabulary, or rather to put it another way, the quest for artistic writing, and biblical style[65] – all that will continue to characterize the elevated style.

5.3.2   *Parataxis*

Other traits in fact announce the arrival of medieval prose, notably the paratactic style. There are two aspects to it.

(1) In the case of simple narrative, paratactic style no doubt approaches what Gregory understood as *sermo piscatorius*: an unaffected style, composed of independent or participial clauses, with some noun clauses, like a simple, easy to follow melody over against the polyphony of *hypotaxis*. The narrated facts are set one beside the others, following a principle of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*; sometimes an explanation is introduced simply by an *enim* to recall a previous fact that allows better understanding. The scenes unfold in the most direct manner (an excellent example is the flight of Attalus, *Hist*. 3.15, with its direct discourse). What corresponds to the simplicity of tone that Gregory claims when he speaks of unfolding an account simply (*simplicem historiam explicare*[66]) are passages of narrative. This simple style (*stylus simplex*) was in the course of becoming characteristic of historiographic prose, at least in its least elaborate forms, such as the Chronicle of Jerome or that of Marius of Avenches, bishop of Lausanne, probably born near 530 and so a precise contemporary of Gregory's.[67] It shows its effectiveness in historical

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64   *Hist*. 8.33, 401, line 10 (= *venientem virum*).

65   Regarding the biblical style, the similarities to St. Jerome and Gregory the Great, to the Rule of the Master, have been underscored by Paul Antin, "Notes sur le style de Grégoire de Tours et ses emprunts à Philostrate," *Latomus* 22 (1963), 273–284, rept in idem, *Recueil sur saint Jérôme*, Coll. Latomus 95 (Bruxelles, 1968), 419–434.

66   VM 1.5, 141, line 2.

67   By comparison, Gregory's style even appears subtle and varied. The editor, Justin Favrod (Lausanne, 1993), 55–56, draws attention to several Merovingian traits, in the unique eleventh-century manuscript, identical to those found in Gregory. The case is analogous to what we would know of Gregory's language if we had only the Monte Cassino manuscript.

compilation,[68] to which it gives a certain sureness in clearly unfolding the linearity of chronological succession, without *hypotaxis*. With Dares in the 5th century, the simple style gives an appearance of historical technicality, and for this reason would be often imitated in the Middle Ages (for example, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, like Dares, a teller of made-up stories). It is also approximately the style of Gregory the Great in the *Dialogues*, which differs so much from his other works.

(2) *Parataxis* can also present itself as a stylistic coloring, ostensibly affected, either in the form of a tricolon – that is a sentence with three clearly defined parts, sometimes independent clauses – in keeping with the pure rhetorical tradition,[69] or in the form of the commatic style of short-clauses in parallel segments, as spoken by Aredius, the skilful conciliator whose eloquence Gregory praises.[70] This is the process of accumulation that Gregory is fond of in descriptions of persons, generally in the apparitions of saints.[71]

In any case this accumulative process was what he found in earlier hagiography, in the descriptions composed of lists of virtues. "Erat enim iocundus in fabulis, strinuus in consiliis, iustus in iuditiis et in commisso fidelis," applied not to a saint but Aredius, is taken over from the *Acta Sebastiani*.[72] See as well: "advenit vir quidam vultu splendidus, caesariae niveus, vultu decorus," a tricolon delightful to medieval prose writers.[73] Radulf Glaber (*Hist.* 5.1) proceeds in the same way when he wishes to describe the devil who appeared to him at daybreak.

This parallelism of accumulation was much decried by Max Bonnet, who underscores the clumsiness, as he saw it, in a sentence with six successive

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68 See Marek T. Kretschner, *Rewriting Roman History in the Middle Ages. The 'Historia romana' and the Manuscript Bamberg* (Leiden/Boston, 2007).

69 Like some other rhetorical figures, *tricolon* appear especially in the passages in which Gregory informs no one of anything, but summarizes well known facts, so that what matters is the way they are told. The beginning of the first book of the *Histories*, which summarizes sacred history allusively because of being brief, offers fine examples of this figure: "commovetur enim ut terreat, pellet ut revocet, irascitur ut emendet" (1.4, 6, line 20); "gentibus traduntur, subiugantur, intercedunt" (1.16, 15 line, 15).

70 *Hist.* 2.32, 80, line 6: "Depopularis agros, prata depascis, vineas dissecas, oliveta succidis omnesque regionis fructus evertis."

71 *VJ* 9, 118, line 31: "Dicebat eum statura esse procerum, veste nitidum, elegantia eximium, vultu hilarem, flava caesariae, inmixtis canis, incessu expeditum, voce liberum, allocutione blandissimum."

72 *Hist.* 2.32, 79–80. *Acta Sebastiani* 1 (c. 1021C), PL 17: "Erat enim vir totius prudentiae, in sermone verax, in judicio justus, in consilio providus, in commisso fidelis, in interventu strenuus, in bonitate conspicuus, in universa morum honestate praeclarus."

73 *VM* 4.37, 209, line 13.

ablatives, following a short opening nominative clause: "gratias agentes, navigio prospero, sequente patroni praesidio, undis lenibus, temperatis flatibus, velo pendulo, mare tranquillo, velociter ad portum Galliciae pervenerunt."[74] Now this judgment is a little unfair. The balancing by rhyme of the ablatives grouped in pairs seems to be that of an easy swell, of an almost dreamlike slide underscoring the ease of a sea crossing miraculously assisted (the passengers carry relics!). This commatic style, a cross between parataxis and parallelism, is a search for vividness rather than some kind of clumsiness. It approximately corresponds to the 'incisive' style, composed of an accumulation of brief clauses (*commata*), which have been noted in Cicero, Saint Augustine, or Caesarius of Arles, as opposed to a more ample periodic style. Gregory uses the alternation of these styles in a wholly deliberate and judicious way.

When Gregory gathers together participial clauses, the way in which he wraps up the whole of a narrative development in a single sentence with juxtaposed clauses having the same structure – all this recalls school exercises of *abbreviatio*.[75] This procedure is especially frequent in Book 1 of the *Histories*, in which Gregory summarizes the whole of world history down to Saint Martin, a task obviously involving a high degree of synthesis. The abridgement of accumulated facts, which obviously can only be an often allusive recollection of events well known to the readers, leads to massive emphasis by means of a series of elements, all constructed in the same way, that inevitably seem to go in the same direction, attached one to the other with an obviousness that can do without every connection or explanation. God's will in history, which is its true sense, shows itself by paratactic accumulation. We shall see examples of it in relation to parallelism, in which parataxis most often results. For parallelism is generally paratactic, or it loses its force. It is a way to underscore, if only by the identity of structures, analogies or antitheses that were hereafter more effectively visible in this way than by the *hypotaxis* of the classical language.

The fragmentation of discourse ends sometimes in syntactical structures not particularly clear to us, with changes of subject that are not signalled, lack of precision aggravated by the tendency to not express a pronoun if it is supplied by a participle in apposition, and by agreements often according to sense. Because each segment of text is self-sufficient, anacoluthons in Gregory end up almost forming a system. One may always say that he would have corrected them if he

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74   *VM* 1.11, 145, line 37.

75   The reduction of a whole story to a single sentence by the use of participles is one of the counsels for *reductio* given by Matthew of Vendôme in his *Ars versificatoria*, (ed.) Fr. Munari (Rome 1988) from the end of the 12th century.

had had the time,[76] but I am inclined to believe that this goes beyond inadvertence and shares in a conception of the sentence that is not that of the grammarians; and that for Gregory, the compactness of the sense does not necessarily proceed by way of syntactic compactness but by way of the temporal succession of the events of the narrative considered one by one. Each of the different units can have its unity and even its logic, even if they do not fit perfectly together. They each have their own independence. This fact can be linked to the taste for parataxis and for a narrative composed of accumulation.

5.3.3   *Direct Discourse*

Another trait combining the apparently naïve aspect of the narrative with carefully chosen possibilities of development is the frequency of direct discourse.

One may approach the subject by considering the rewriting of Prudentius' *Apotheosis* 449–502, in GM 40 (p. 63). Here is a narrative telling the story of a young soldier who comes forward as a Christian when facing an emperor who is furious at the failure of the pagan sacrifices. By freely reworking the metrical verses into prose, Gregory introduces direct discourse. Despite certain remnants of poetic vocabulary, he does not try for rhetorical effects or rhyme; but he emphasizes the theatrical aspect of the account, with the gesture of the hero throwing his weapons to the ground; and most of all he enormously lengthens, as a sort of an *apologia*, the declaration of faith of the young man as he proclaims his Christianity. Likewise, when Gregory rewrites his own story of the two chaste spouses of GC 31 in *Hist.* 1.47, he expands the direct discourse by adding an entire scene in which the young wife convinces her spouse on the night of the marriage to preserve his chastity. The young man's words remain perfectly banal, while in contrast those of the young wife – vehement, full of anaphora, of exclamations, of sound effect, of antitheses – are highly finished. No doubt remains about the author's partiality to the wife's stance, the only convincing one.

These are two examples of effective narrative, in which direct discourse is meant to persuade. Indeed, in direct discourse, the wording is often Gregory's, as for example, when he reconstructs Fredegar's words at the death of her sons. Certainly, such speeches give pace and vividness to the account, but they do not share in its verisimilitude except by a very loose convention. They can also be as charged with rhetorical effect as the prefaces in which Gregory seeks to reach his reader. Not only do speeches aim to give an impression of vivacity and nearness, with a more frequent use of 'evolved' turns of phrase that are those used in everyday language, but also, as soon as these words have some solemnity (objurgations, prophecies, sayings of saints), they are endowed with

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76   M. Bonnet, *Le latin*, 746.

the resources of gnomic language and of semi-sacred formulas: balance, parallelism, often rhyme, as we shall see (Avitus urging Gundobad: "quod corde te dicis credere, ore profer in plebe"; or the new Eve, the wife of Bishop Stremonius, calling out at the church door, using anaphora and parallelisms: "Quousque sacerdos dormis? Quousque hostia clausa non reseras? Cur satellitem spernes? Cur…, etc.").[77]

5.3.4   *Word Order*

On this point Bonnet is especially unjust or disinclined to understand. True, Gregory writes, not in accordance with 'natural' order, but in such a way as to produce an effect, and more generally to help in understanding his phrasing.

Thus, most of the word inversion (hyperbaton) which Bonnet finds affected[78] is of a type that is found again very regularly in medieval Latin, because it helps in perceiving the relations between the different syntagmas: the verb does not come at the end, but packaged into the nearest noun and modifier grouping ("aut metrico depingeret versu," "Hebreae gentis habere notitiam," "quali Isrealitarum fuerint tempore," "in mare obrutus est Rubro," "Romanum rexit imperium," "sevitia impulit paganorum," "ad liberandum properant sacerdotem," "psallentioque dirigunt copioso," "regnum decidit Wandalorum," "ad viam revocarent salutis," "genus semper deliquit humanum," "parentum distulit moenas," among the examples cited by Bonnet. This will become, not the rule, but an admired possibility of the high language of the monastic epoch down to the 12th century, and especially when it is the adjective or the complement of the noun that comes before the substantive ("metrico depingeret versu"), in such a way that the noun is expected but with the relation of the noun group to the verb being as close as possible. The same care to include the verb within what it governs explains, for example, "ista…iugiter intuens dici," cited by Bonnet; other cases are a way to separate attribute and noun ("se virtutibus ostenderet deum"). Finally, what Bonnet labelled as a clumsy breaking of an antithesis is perhaps caused by a concern to balance the sentence by means of rhyme: "in aliis vineis vix adhuc erumpunt gemmae, in hoc vero vase vinum defluit a virtute," in which the rhyme with *gemmae* could determine the order of words, with moreover the 'virtue' of St Julian serving to end the *v* alliteration.[79] It seems to me that Gregory's

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77   *Hist.* 2.34, 82 line 6; *Hist.* 1.44, 29 line 5.

78   *Le latin*, 718–719.

79   *VJ* 36.28, 129. In any case the whole page illustrates a tendency to rhyme, as often in moments of emotion and wonder (see in the next lines: *vinea / Falerna; vindemia/reperta; arbore/undae*).

inversions are less often the result of an unreasonable displacement of words[80] than the result of a tendency that would later develop, namely a new deployment of the sentence elements. One finds in Gregory certain cases of 'peeling the onion' construction, as it is found in the 11th century, in which the sentence is constructed with the first and the last word, then the second and the next-to-last. Such is "Hireneum diversis in sua carnifex praesentia poenis adfectum Christo…per martyrium dedicavit,"[81] with this difference: Gregory thought it well to introduce the subject, *carnifex*, in the middle of the central complement in the accusative (*Hireneum…adfectum*), no doubt believing that he was correct because, even in classical Latin, it is permissible to insert the subject of the sentence within an ablative absolute if the subject is the same in the participial and main clause, and that here he brought together the subject and the reflective possessive referring to it (*in sua presentia*). Similarly, Gregory inserts the subject within an ablative absolute, "hoc a sancto apostolo pontifex responso suscepto,"[82] and in this case the subject (*pontifex*) separates an ablative of agent (*ab sancto apostolo*) from the main body of the ablative absolute (*hoc…responso suscepto*), *hoc* simply heralding its later appearance; these inversions in fact pose no problem and even help comprehension, in spite of Bonnet's disgust.[83] Besides, certain inversions are catalogued in the rhetorical manuals of Antiquity, such as the anteposition of determinant adjectives before the preposition (*transgressio perversione*), as in *hac in terra*. They are therefore rhetorically sound.

Likewise, what Bonnet calls the caesura (p. 720), "surdus permanebat ac mutus," very closely resembles standard medieval forms, such as the "Dives eram et dilectus" of Hugh Primas of Orleans. It may further be observed that the examples cited as clumsy produce a sort of ternary rhythm, with the third element shortened, "pallam holosericam auroque exornatam et gemmis";[84] this is a characteristic of the 13th-century rhythm that Luigi Malagoli called 'closed', the tendency to abbreviate the final segments of sentences in order to end them.[85] This practice generates a sort of slowed lengthening, like an echo.

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80   This does happen to him. The two cases cited by Max Bonnet, *Le latin*, 719, bear moreover on adverbs being placed early instead directly before the word they modify.

81   *Hist.* 1.29, 22, line 7: "the executioner subjected Irenaeus to various tortures in his presence and committed him to Christ through martydom."

82   *Hist.* 2.5, 46 line 16.

83   Bonnet, *Le latin*, 721.

84   *GM* 71, 86 line 1.

85   Luigi Malagoli, *Lo stile del Duecento* (Pisa 1956).

Thus, one sees, it is virtually impossible to consider word order in Gregory without also taking into consideration the search for parallelisms and even of rhyme, methods which had already been observed by Karl Langosch, but whose role is doubtless more constructive than ornamental.[86]

5.3.5 *Parallelism*

Parallelisms are a way to replace the hypotaxis of classical syntax. If the elements of an event are set in parallel, the mind builds a link from one to the other by the evidence of the parallelism of the expressions: "caecus adveniens fideliter orationem fudit, visum recipere meruit.[87] Biblical parataxis has a clear influence on the taste for this: speaking simply, like the Bible, involves juxtaposing facts whose relationship are sufficiently apparent. With regard to the syntax of participial clauses, we saw that they presented in fact a succession of independent affirmations, vaguely tied by an apparent subordination, which link themselves together in the time of the wording of the text in the same order as in real time. Parallelism plays the same connecting role between two facts or two expressions, when the temporal and causal connection is distant or absent. For example, as in this comparison of an early and recent manifestation of Martin (with typographic emphasis on the parallelism):

> Sed illud anterius miraculum visum est paucis,
>> istud apparuit populis universis.
> In illud fuit virtutis indicium,
>> in istum gratiae supplementum;
> illud tunc fuit occultum propter jactantiam,
>> istum manifestum est cunctis ad gloriam.[88]

A famous contrasting parallelism is the one placed in the mouth of St Remigius at the moment of baptising Clovis: "adora quod incendisti, incende quod adorasti."[89] What is more it involves a repetition with chiasmus, and Gregory hastens to underscore Remigius' learning and rhetorical art.

The method often appears when the aim is not to teach something to the reader but to recall to him what he already knows, by placing it in series. For example, when the point is to recall the miracles of Christ (typographic emphasis added):

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86   Karl Langosch, "Gregor von Tours," in idem, *Profile des lateinische Mittelalters* (Darmstadt, 1967), 27–48, here 43–44.

87   *VJ* 50, 134, line 3.

88   *GC* 20, 310, line 6–9.

89   *Hist.* 2.31, 77, line 10.

> Haustos enim latices   in vini sapore   convertit,
> caecorum oculis,   depulsa nocte,   lumen infudit,
> paralyticorum gressus,   ablata debilitate,   direxit,
> febres aegrotantium,   fugato ardore,   restinxit,
> ydropicum,   compresso tumore,   sanavit,
> lepram discedere   sacri oris virtute   mandavit,
> mulierem daemonio inclinatam,   invidentibus Iudaeis,   erexit,
> super aquas vero,   non dehiscentibus aquis,   incessit,
> profluvium mulieris   tactu fimbriae salutaris   avertit...[90]

The bias toward ternarity, a threefold structure, is crystal clear: each element (a printed line in the text above) must be composed of two complements and one verb; except for the first element, in which the impetus is not yet established, the ablative absolutes or complements that occupy the central place could be omitted and grammatical integrity, and basic sense, retained. A few variations aside, there is in any case a structure of object/circumstance in the ablative/verb. A few lines later, Gregory also presents in parallel segments the three miracles of Christ's resurrection, in which ternarity (object/verb/complement), concludes this time on complements of place, aids no doubt for the memory, but nevertheless secondary (and sporting variation in their prepositions):

> archisynagogi filiam   resuscitavit   in domo
> unicum viduae   surgere jussit   ad portae egressum
> et Lazarum   vocavit   ex monumento.

The desire for parallelism is evident, and Bonnet (p. 721) draws attention to many other cases under the names of *isocolon* (the use of equal *cola*) and *isoptoton* (the use of identical case or verbal endings), notably for enumerations in which the deliberatively repetitive structure emphasizes the variation of the terms ("Per hanc viam Abel iustus suscipitur, Enoch beatus adsumitur, Noe reservatur, Abraham elegitur, Isaac benedicitur, Iacob dilatatur, Ioseph custoditur..."[91]). One might think that there is a certain vanity in this search for varying but parallel terms, resembling a rhetorical exercise of *variatio*. But it is noteworthy that these demonstrations very often occur at moments of looking back, when Gregory summarizes, recalls, evokes facts otherwise known, whose accumulation makes sense in itself and conveys the wealth of a tradition. Parataxis is involved, to be sure, but it is not a tacked-on ornament: it is a way of seeing through the facts of sacred history conformity to

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90   *GM* 2, 38 line 32.
91   *VJ* 1, 113 lines 23 f.

the divine plan, a true continuity and analogy, a typology that becomes visible through the very structure of the wording. This practice is encountered only at strong points, prologues or repetitions, or when Gregory in person defends orthodoxy against an Arian whom he considers a heretic (*Hist.* 5.43), proving clearly that he regards this kind of pattern as having demonstrative force. If one takes the passage of *Hist.* 1.20 summarizing Christ's apostolate in one chapter – thus a parallel to the chapter of GM cited above – one observes that it is even more synthetic (one sentence for the narrative of his actions, one for his passion) and even more parallel than its GM counterpart, having groups of four, then three *cola*, showing the simultaneity of Christ's goodness and the human wickedness that responds to it – a construction that the best medieval monastic prose writers would have enthusiastically admired:

> Domino autem Deo nostro Iesu Christo paenitentiam praedicante,
> baptismi gratiam tribuente
> vel caelestem regnum cunctis gentibus promittente
> atque prodigia et signa per populos operante,
>
> hoc est dum de aquis vina profert,
> dum febris extinguit,
> dum caecis lumen tribuit,
> dum sepultis vitam restituit,
>
> dum obsessos ab inmundis spiritibus liberat,
> dum leprosos miserabili turpentes cute reformat,
> ac dum alia multa signa faciens manifestissime se Deum populis esse declarat,
>
> in Iudaeis ira succenditur,
> invidia exagitatur,
> ac mens de sanguine profetarum pasta, ut *iustum* interimat, *iniuste* molitur.[92]
>
> Ergo, ut veterum vatum conplerentur oracula,
> a discipulo traditur,
> a pontificibus condemnatur,
> a Iudaeis inluditur,

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92 Italics signify the figure *annominatio*, a form of punning in the broad sense: "the mind… unjustly strives to destroy one who is just."

> cum iniquis crucifigitur,
> a militibus, amisso spiritu, custoditur.

As one can see, these parallel structures are often accompanied by the rhyme that underscores them.

5.3.6 *Rhyme*

Gregory is absent from Karl Polheim's work on rhymed prose, and Max Bonnet is surprised that Gregory uses it so little.[93] But this is a fault of perspective: rhymed prose is present in many cases, not in a systematic way, but when it can emphasize what Gregory has in mind. His protégé and friend Venantius Fortunatus uses it in almost the same way. Of course one needs to distinguish rhyme that comes only from the parallelism of identically constructed sentence segments (which can be not only an internal consequence of the structure itself but also a way of emphasizing, as in the previous example) from rhyme that rests on the homophony of *heteroptoton* (where different words have the same sound without the same case endings – marked in italics in the examples below). Such rhyme, though rarer, is more clearly chosen for its merits, as in the account of Martin's death:

> Martinus... migravit ex hoc mu*ndo*, et nunc angeli cane*ndo* eum deferunt...[94]

Or in Saints Peter and Paul's explanation for the destruction of Metz:

> clamor malitiæ eorum [namely its citizens] ascendit coram *Deo*; ideo civitas haec cremabitur incen*dio*.[95]

Rhyme like this nevertheless is often found, though not exclusively, in formulas, prayers, and rebukes in a direct style, as in this injunction of Martin,

> Ne tremueris, sed facito super frontem signum venerandae cruc*is*, statimque sanaber*is*[96]

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93   Bonnet, *Le latin*, 725–726.
94   *VM* 1.4, 140, line 16.
95   *Hist.* 2.6, 47, line 20.
96   *VM* 4.37, 209, line 14.

If one wishes to find rhymed sentences in the *Histories*, one must search preferably among generally brief passages of direct speech – here there are formulas striking enough for Gregory to cite them word for word or to consider them representative, and they are often punchy, ready to force themselves lastingly into the memory, as in the exhortation of Avitus to Gundobad:

> quod corde te dicis credere,
>   ore profer in plebe …
> melius est ut te praecedente cognoscant veritatem,
>   quam pereunte permaneant in errorem.[97]

Often, one can see, rhyme connects the part of the sentence that contains an antecedent and its relative clause. In the central Middle Ages, this will remain one of the most frequent rhymes among authors who do not rhyme; such rhyme establishes a special hermeneutic sign between the main and the relative clause, a relation of cause to effect or of antithesis:

> ad eius gratiam revertaris
> cui multum inveniris esse culpabilis[98]

> Quid tibi prosunt peritura lucra
> quae aeternae vitae pariunt detrimenta?[99]

> Merito tale aurum accepit
> qui domino suo ad mortem propria voluntate deducit.[100]

These three examples are also all in direct speech.

Rhyme is also found rather often at the end of chapters or paragraphs, in parallel formulas. A final appraisal of Chlothild:

> non ambitio saeculi nec facultas   extulit ad ruinam,
>   sed humilitas   evexit ad gratiam[101]

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97   *Hist.* 2.34; or 4.42, 177, lines 1–3: Mummolus' threatening indignation; and 6.5, 271.

98   *Hist.* 6.32, 303, line 3, *heteroptoton*; the antecedent *eius* is Fredegund and the passage is part of Chilperic's advice to Leudast.

99   *GM* 57, 78, line 12; *homeoptoton*.

100 *Hist.* 2.42, 3, line 1; *homeoptoton*. Clovis to the followers of Ragnachar.

101 *Hist.* 3.18, 120, line 6.

A fire put out thanks to the prayer of Bishop Mamertus:

> Quid plura ? Penetravit excelsa poli
>   oratio ponteficis incliti
> restinxitque domus incendium
>   flumen profluentium lacrimarum.
> Cumque haec agerentur adpropinquante ascensione
>   ut iam diximus, maiestatis dominicae
> indixit populis ieiunium,
>   instituit orandi modum,
> edendi seriem,
>   erogandi helarem dispensationem[102]

Triple parallelism imitating a biblical *gradatio*, but with rhyme introduced into it, in addition to a higher degree of abstraction:

ut residuum proinae	proteriret tempestas,
et residuum tempestatis	exuriret siccitas,
et residuum siccitatis	auferret hostilitas[103]

The biblical terms of the model for this (Joel 1:4), *eruga, brucus, rubigo,* are rendered with the abstractions *tempestas, siccitas, hostilitas*. Gregory of Tours does not often rhyme narrative passages, but he will sometimes rhyme the commentary he makes of them, when he wishes to arouse indignation or admiration.

The emotive value of rhyme is obvious. Thus, while it is true, as has been observed, that he can relate horrible events without apparently raising an eyebrow (such as the assassination of Galswinth mentioned above), he will use

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102 *Hist.* 2.34, 83, lines 16–19. The example is particularly interesting because of the rupture between the fire and the desolation that casts Bishop Mamertus in tears at the foot of the altar, and the resolution, underscored by the *Quid plura ?*, often used for a change of tone, which here presents the result as though instantaneous, since there is no more reason to dwell on it. This passage from disorder to order, which is extended in thanksgivings firmly framed by the victorious bishop, is conveyed by a transition from wavering articulation to wording organized in rhymed *cola*, in pairs with an analogous length (*parisocolon*). A bishop who saves his flock, has them fast, pray, open their purses (instutionalized in the Rogations) – now this is precisely what arouses Gregory's enthusiasm! Hence the emotional saturation of the wording, already indicated above in connection with enallages.

103 *Hist.* 6.45, 319 line 10. Gregory summarizing the devastation wrought by Rigunth's party travelling south.

rhyme to provide solemnity to their tone, like a musical pause that slows the pace and so invites meditation.

Rhyme appears a little more often in the *Miracula* than in the *Historiae*, because meditation recurs there even more often. I have commented elsewhere on an example of rhymed direct discourse in the *VM* 1.4.[104] As soon as the desire for edification seizes Gregory, he falls almost inevitably into often antithetical constructions, such as the apostrophe on avarice which Bonnet noticed is a display piece (and which might be regarded as a distant forebear of the style of Saint Bernard and of the great monastic authors of the 12th century), with its balanced *parisocola*, its sound effects, and even the inclusion of the metaphorical genitive:

> Ut quid firmam loricam mentis
> modica transverberas sagitta cupiditatis?'[105]

The rhyme created by *homeoptoton*, relying on similar case or verbal endings, underscores the parallelism of the construction. Here is the speech that Gregory places in his own mouth when he argues with a Jew:

> …quem [sc. genus humanum] nunquam terruit
> nec submersio diluvii
> nec incendium Sodomae[106]
> nec plagae Aegypti
> nec miraculum maris Iordanisque divisi;
> qui semper legi Dei restitit,
> prophetis non crededit,
> et non solum non crededit,
> verum etiam ipsos predicatores paenitentiae interemit! [107]

One will notice the perfect symmetry of the parallel syntagmata, four for each relative clause.

Gregory employs the same device in praise of Saint Martin, after describing Saint Ambrose's miraculous attendance at Martin's funeral:

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104   In "Entre plusieurs fidélités" (cited above n. 4).

105   *GM* 57, 78, lines 8–14: "why do you pierce the solid breastplate of the spirit with the derisory arrow of covetousness?" Bonnet*, Le latin*, 707 and n. 1.

106   The pronunciation of the terminations of *Sodomae* and *diluvii* are probably close.

107   *Hist.* 6.5, 270–272.

> O beatum virum [sc. Martinum], in cujus transitu
> sanctorum canit numerus,
>   angelorum exultat chorus,
>   omniumque caelestium virtutum occurrit exercitus;
> diabolus praesumptione confunditur,
>   eclesia virtute roboratur,
>   sacerdotes revelatione glorificantur;
> quem Michahel adsumpsit cum angelis,
>   Maria suscepit cum virginum choris,
>   paradisus retinet laetum cum sanctis.[108]

A perfect structure employing three rhymes (*us/ur/is*), each used three times, sustained by intermediary *homeoptota* (*sanctorum-angelorum-virtutum, prae-sumptione-virtute-revelatione*), nine relative clauses constructed in parallel fashion, all placed at the service of exemplary and exultant invocation.[109] The vocative of laudatory invocation, which tends to introduce emotion-laden sequences, often draws to itself the use of rhyme and will continue to be frequent in the following centuries.

The same emotion occurs in descriptions of other solemn events:

> invenerunt corpus beati confessoris ita inlaesum
>   ut nulla dissolutio in corpore,
>   nulla putredo repperiretur in veste,
>   sed ita erant cuncta integra
>   ac si ipsa, ut ita dixerim, hora
>   tumulo putarentur ingesta.[110]

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108 *Virt. Mart.* 1.5, 141, lines 15–16; cited by Bonnet, *Le latin*, 751, for the enumeration, not for the rhyme.

109 In doing so, Gregory approaches the style of contemporay and slightly later prayers, about which Philippe Bernard has magisterially shown their deep-rootedness in the rhetorical tradition of the ancient praise oration: Philippe Bernard, "Les fastes de l'éloge dans les liturgies latines, du IVe au IXe siècle," in *Le discours d'éloge entre Antiquité et Moyen Âge,* (eds.) Lionel Mary et Michel Sot (Paris, 2001), 79–139.

110 *GC* 100, 362 line 13–15. 'They found the body of the holy confessor so intact that no corporeal corruption was found on his body, no putrefaction in his clothes; everything was so intact that one might think that it had all been placed in the tomb, as it were, that very hour.' The last clause is slightly incoherent, combining the value of a result and comparitive clause, perhaps in order to maintain the rhyme in *a* at the end of the sentence.

(The second rhyming element employs not *homeoptoton* but *heteroptoton*, an ablative singular rhyming with plural nominatives.)

A further example is Gregory's account of the institution of the Rogations by Saint Mamertus in the wake of an earthquake: after a long, moving but unrhymed description of the general desolation, a *Quid plura?* introduces the rhymed passage cited above.[111]

Even in more narrative passages, Gregory does not shrink from rhyme as soon as he wants to draw attention to what he has to say. When caught up in a binary rhyme, he does not avoid assonance as carefully as an ancient author would have. From the description of Saint Leobardus' death:

> Erat enim mensis decimus,   quando haec est effatus.
> Duodecimo autem mense,   coepit iterum graviter aegrotare.[112]

Or again in the events leading to Ambrose's miraculous attendance at Martin's funeral:

> ...erat consuetudo
> veniens lector cum libro
> non antea legere presumeret
> quam sanctus nutu jussisset.

The next sentence contains the rhymes *dominica/lecta* and *proferret/obdormiret*.[113]

He even uses alternating rhymes, when forecasting the ultimate fate of priests who plotted against their bishop:

> Qui non ambiguuntur pari*ter*   possidere tartarum,
> qui simul egerunt nequi*ter*   contra sanctum episcopum suum.[114]

And he does not neglect assonances that underscore a parallelism, the words being placed in such a way as to make an analogous sound chain, as in the wish for himself, following his account of Martin's freeing Wiliachar literally from chains:

> ...ut sic absolveret meor*um* ligament*a* peccamin*um*
> sicut super e*um* [sc. Wiliachar] contrivit ponder*a* catenar*um*![115]

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111   *Hist.* 2.34, 83.

112   *VP* 20.4, 293, lines 25–26.

113   *VM* 1.5, 141, lines 3–6.

114   *Hist.* 2.23, 69 line 23.

115   *VM* 1.23, 150, line 32. This comes at the end of the chapter, as a kind of meditative conclusion to the account of the miracle.

In sum, rhyme for Gregory is indeed a 'color', as in antiquity. He used it when he wished to produce an effect, never only as an ornament. Yet he does tend to use it in a dominant fashion in certain passages, and especially in his hagiographic works.[116] He does not rhyme the prefaces even though their style is especially well finished. One should note that this moderation is not the practice among all the authors of his time: the episcopal letter to Radegund that he cites in extenso is much more rhymed, showing the existence at this time of the tendency to use rhyme systematically as a way of solemnizing one's writing.[117]

It is possible, therefore, that Gregory, even on the subject of rhyme, considers that he writes in a simple manner, without excessive contrivance. Rhyme comes naturally to him when he had something to emphasize or highlight. It strengthens an expressiveness based on parallelisms and a parataxis based on the biblical model. Gregory's slightly younger contemporary, Isidore of Seville, would perfect the duplication-variation that would serve as a model for centuries. Gregory of Tours would perhaps have found excessive the pursuit of the synonymic style, but he is travelling the same path – the one that leads from St Augustine to Gregory the Great, then to the high monastic prose of the 9th through 12th centuries.

So, beyond certain ornaments that Gregory can also display, such as *gradatio*[118] and *annominatio*,[119] the artistic prose of the monastic epoch will rest essentially on a quest for parallelisms that structure thought by creating analogies between facts, their causes, and their consequences, but also establishing facts themselves and their deeper meaning. This style makes of the very form of the wording an explanation and an enhancement of the sense in a way of thought constantly turned toward the search for analogy between the visible and the invisible. Gregory of Tours is on the way to this aesthetic.

A morphology in the throes of evolution, anacoluthons that he perhaps thought after all made his discourse 'natural,' like the *sermo piscatorius*, prevent us from seeing the real nature of his style. It is at once energetic and taut – and capable of keen observation – when he describes events, with the efficiency of the narrative style, and, when what he says is close to his heart and he is moved, it can be insistent, making an appeal to pathos (the emotional style).

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116   On the role of hagiographic texts for attaining a mode of expression saturated with ways to generate emotion, see P. Bourgain, "La compositio," 87–88.

117   *Hist.* 9. 39, 461.

118   E.g. *VP* 12, 26, lines, 22–25: "Disciplina ergo haec *timorem* Domini facit, *timor* autem Domini initium *sapientiae* praebet, *sapientia* vero *dilegere* Deum docet; *dilectio* enim Dei etc."

119   E.g. *Hist.* 4.12, 143 lines 7–8: "in hoc *sepulchro* super *sepultum ... sepelitur.*"

Like his contemporary Gregory the Great, who is so different in the Dialogues as opposed to his exegetical meditations, our Gregory has two styles, but they alternate in the same works.

If this alternation of styles is taken into account, is his style really personal ? Specialists in patristics or Latin style see in him only what corresponds to, or contravenes, their criteria, and medievalists see what heralds the kind of phrasing to which they are accustomed. It is thankless to be almost alone in representing a transition. And yet, in his good moments, Gregory of Tours' style is inimitable. When he is used by later writers, the wording coming from him has a sort of quivering, a rhythm that allow them to be recognizable as a foreign body even when there is no indication of quotation (in Aymeric of Peyrac, unmarked passages of Gregory's prefaces notably elevate the discourse).[120]

This perspective helps us reread a passage that, without a shadow of a doubt, aroused in him deep feelings. At the end of the *Histories*, Gregory expressed his hope for the fate of his works (*libri*), which he has just listed. The passage consists of three continuous periods:

> Quos libros licet stilo rusticiori conscrips*eri*m,
> tamen coniuro omnes sacerdotes Domi*ni*,
> qui post me humilem ecclesiam Turonicam sunt rectu*ri*,
> per adventum domini nostri Iesu Chris*ti*
> ac terribilem reis omnibus iudicii diem,
> sic numquam confu*si* de ipso iudicio discedentes cum diabolo
> condempnemi*ni*,
> ut numquam libros hos abole*ri*   faciatis aut rescri*bi*,
> quasi quaedam eli*gentes*   et quaedam praetermitt*entes,*
> sed ita omnia vobiscum integra inlibataque permaneant,   sicut a nobis
> relicta sunt.
>
> Quod si te, o sacerdos Dei, quicumque es, Martianus [Capella] noster
> septem disciplinis erudiit,
>   id est, si te in gramma*ticis*   docuit legere,
>   in dialec*ticis*   altercationum propositiones advert*ere,*
>   in retho*ricis*   genera metrorum agnoscere,

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120   For Aymeric, see Paul Mironneau, "Aymeric de Peyrac, abbé de Moissac (1377–1406) et historien : Edition et présentation du 'Stromatheus tragicus de obitu Karoli Magni'" in *Positions des thèses de l'École des chartes*, 1989, 155–160.

> in geometricis   terrarum linearumque mensuras colligere,
> in astrologiis   cursus siderum contemplare,
> in arithmeticis   numerorum partes colligere,
> in armoniis   sonorum modulationes suavium accentuum carmini-
> bus concrepare,
> si in his omnibus ita fueris exercitatus,
> ut tibi stilus noster sit rusticus,
> nec sic quoque, deprecor, ut avellas quae scripsi.
> Sed si tibi in his quiddam placuerit,   salvo opere nostro,   te
> scribere versu non abnuo.[121]

This particularly well finished epilogue would poorly illustrate the tendency to parataxis that, for him, is one of the processes of narrative, but not a constant tendency. The syntax of the epilogue is ample, built up and pressing, and it is instructive to compare with an identical evocation of the seven liberal arts in the preface of Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* six centuries later.[122] There is the same parallelism, underscored by rhyme – based on *heteroptoton* in Gregory and in Alan possessing an identity that could have been easily broken by varying the order of words or by choosing a deponent verb; there is also the same precision in definition, somewhat more concrete in Gregory and more abstract in his 12th-century counterpart; and there is the same aesthetic of solemn and structured discourse with a view to heightened emphasis. When such is the case in Gregory, the resort to rhetoric is that which he finds in his readings and notably in St Augustine. In a general way, one must consider the places where the passages that are polished, balanced, and antithetical or poetic in tone are set: these are never neutral spots, and they contrast all the more with the deliberate simplicity of the rest of the account. They are either prefaces, conclusions, reflective pauses – then, the aesthetic applied is that of parallelism and rhythm, with rhyme flowing from this rhythm or strengthening it – or moments at the core of the narration in which Gregory speaks of what is particularly close to his heart: baptisms (that of Clovis), ceremonies, the prayers of bishops or saints that are going to be answered, the anxious waiting for a miracle, nocturnal scenes.[123] Are these really expressive tics that come to him just in some cases? Gregory responds rather to a certain kind of emotion (as brought on, for

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121   *Hist.* 10.31, 536.

122   Ed. Robert Bossuat (Paris 1955), 56. Commentary in P. Bourgain, *Le latin médiéval* (Turnhout 2005), 517–519.

123   For some nighttime settings see: *GM* 88, *VJ* 20, *VM* 2.17.

example, by the night, the waiting, and the imminence of a miracle) by giving it a perspective that solemnizes its circumstances. One could thus speak of an emotional style. Except perhaps in the not evidently essential metaphors that express moments of time – dawn, twilight, cockcrow (e.g. *VP* 2.4) – it is not a matter of mannerism, since this does not become an automatic device, but corresponds to an expressive reaction to overwhelming emotion.

It seems to me that the conclusion that may be drawn from this linguistic and stylistic study is that Gregory's language is a written language, a very Latin one, highly polished as soon as what he wishes to express touches him deeply. The traits that make his syntax come close to that of the Romance languages merely place him in the long evolution of Latin; they are not the mark of an everyday orality, except sometimes in direct discourse, when he brings out the proximity of the spoken language.

PART 3

Institutional and Material Setting

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CHAPTER 6

The Merovingian State and Administration in the Times of Gregory of Tours

Alexander Callander Murray

6.1   Introduction

Merovingian governance (in an active sense) and the Merovingian state (in an institutional sense) have not fared well in the estimation of historians; the last term even excites the scare quotes 'state' when some writers deign to use it. The terminological problem is old and worth clarifying somewhere else, but does not warrant an argument here. Readers of the present piece can decide for themselves if what I describe constitutes a state or not – and if not they can make up a term of their own for what they find in the sources.

There are many reasons for the negative treatment. The general one is the grand narrative of traditional European scholarship that pictured varying degrees

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*   This subject has largely been treated with uninterest by recent scholars, and even contempt. The subject, looked at more broadly than is the current fashion, is, however, longstanding and huge in scope, beginning in the early Modern Period and covering a literature stretching from the 16th century to the present time, with the older essential works composed to a large extent in French and German. The span precludes even rudimentary consideration here. So that the limited range of the subjects relevant to this presentation could be covered, I have had to rely on self citation more than is ideal. The works recommended in the notes, nevertheless, should, if consulted, direct interested readers to the major treatments and ideas of the last century and a half. There exists no general, modern, analysis of Merovingian administration either in the age of Gregory or the one that follows. Cf. n. 28.

of primitivism and barbarism succeeding the forms and institutions of the fallen Roman empire – a view that has hardly lost its allure.[1] Particular approaches play variations on this theme. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century German historians, and it must be said many others, imagined the Middle Ages as erasing the institutions of Antiquity and slowly reconstructing the distinctive, and ultimately triumphant, forms of European civilization on the basis of Germanic roots. For them Merovingian history was also German history, and Frankish institutions the beginnings of German legal history.[2] Post-war historians have often espoused a more modest focus on the geography of modern Germany and German history more narrowly conceived. Nevertheless many retained the search for Germanic continuity (*Kontinuitätsfrage*), still the shibboleth of post war historiography, and regarded the Merovingian state and its institutions (*Verfassung*) – almost necessarily to maintain the argument – as the link between German history and the Iron Age.[3] The hand of Carolingianists, that relatively populous tribe, has lain heavily on Merovingian history too; its reach, rarely stretching beyond the 7th century, is usually extended in a search for suitably melodramatic foils with which to begin some Carolingian exposition. Finally, to cut short what could grow into a long list of misadventure, let me just comment that the current vogue for pre-state anthropological templates, pseudo-anthropological cultural history, or sociological- and post- Marxist-style modelling has rarely dispelled the old prejudices, just reconfigured and built upon them.

Not just historiographical trends have distorted our view of the Merovingian period. It must be said that Gregory of Tours, and especially his *Histories*, have played a big role in confirming traditional pictures – or at least so it has commonly been thought. One can read elsewhere in this volume how new readings of Gregory's purpose and narrative method hardly support the view of the bishop as the naïve documentarian of a particularly depraved and rudimentary society, but scholars have traditionally thought he did. Even someone as

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1 My comment refers not just to History Television but also to views from the upper Thames, among many others. There are good review articles that capture the tenor of the hyperbolic claims in the flurry of recent works from the last decade: Andrew Gillett's review article in *The Medieval Review* 2007.10.12, http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/16453; and Roger Collins, with an appropriate sense of the absurd and a largely different catchment of works, "Review Article: Making sense of the Early Middle Ages," *English Historical Review* 124/508 (2009), 641–665.

2 See the numerous examples of the genre *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*. The most famous (and still valuable) is that by Heinrich Brunner and Claus von Schwerin, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1906–28). Despite the title, it is largely concerned with Frankish law.

3 The more recent predilection for *Synthese*, a term that can hardly ever go completely wrong, is, alas, often intellectually a last ditch effort to save appearances for the old model of Germanic *Kontinuität*, even while the late Roman context has still barely been explored.

well versed in the sources as the French scholar Ferdinand Lot seems to have laboured under the weight of the traditional wisdom.

Lot was experienced enough not to imagine that the Merovingian state was founded on Germanic principles, but the breakdown of public institutions and the central importance of personal relations are still notable themes in his account. He adopts a polemical tone in characterizing the main players in the Merovingian system. The kings, he says, "performed no services, unless we call the pillaging expeditions services" and "were utterly incapable of organizing anything." The personal qualities of the long succession of individual monarchs are reduced by Lot to a type: "the suspicious, cruel, capricious and selfish despot ... [who] could not be loved." Lot's disparagement was evenhanded. The term "faithful," used in the sources to characterize the aristocracy and its relationship to the king, he regards as an unintentional "antiphrasis"; to apply the word functionaries to their role as office-holders is to make use of too modern a term. Even the suffering subjects of this elite conjunction of personal interest and carefree excess do not get away unscathed: when they get weapons in their hands, they "raise their voice" only to "take up a threatening attitude." Lot's understanding of the Merovingian system as one "without any principles, in which the specialization of functions is rudimentary," is a perspective that many observers of the Frankish state seem to share.[4]

Lot's picture was not drawn from documentary sources, which do not lend themselves to this kind of characterisation. Should there be doubts as to its origins, his idea that the dynasty could not be loved betrays it clearly. At the end of his obituary of the royal arch villain Chilperic (*Hist.* 6.46), Gregory concludes with a summary statement about the king: "Chilperic never loved anyone sincerely and was loved by no one, with the result that when he breathed his last all his followers abandoned him."[5] What Gregory

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4   Ferdinand Lot, *La Fin du monde antique et le début du moyen âge* (Paris, 1927); the English translation, *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginning of the Middle Ages*, appeared for the first time in 1931, and has been reprinted several times since; I cite the Harper edition, New York, 1961, 354–356. Textbooks are unfailingly perfunctory and dismissive. There are more comments on Lot in Alexander Callander Murray, "*Pax et disciplina*: Roman Public Law and the Frankish State," in *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Syracuse, New York, August 13–18, 1996*, (eds.) Kenneth Pennington, Stanley Chodorow and Keith H. Kendall (Vatican City, 2001), 269–285; rpt in *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms*, (ed.) Thomas F.X. Noble, Rewriting Histories Series (New York, 2006) – henceforth, Murray, "*Pax.*"

5   Gregory's obituary of Chilperic (*Hist.* 6.46) should be compared with that of his foil, the Emperor Tiberius (*Hist.* 6.30, s.a. 583, recte 582). Each characteristic of the emperor is an antithesis to that of Chilperic. Its summary: "Loving all, he in turn was loved by all."

presented as a Christian judgment on an individual has become in Lot an historical judgment on an entire dynastic period of history, a single element in a complex narrative for the year 584 transformed into a (modern) moral generalization, purported to hold good for well over two centuries of Merovingian rule.[6]

The narrative of Gregory is part of the reason for accounts like that of Lot and countless others, but the bishop of Tours should not to be blamed for them. He wrote for contemporaries, broadly understood (including kings of the near future, more specifically). His message was sometimes hard, and some have argued short-sighted, but it was not a modern one, despite Lot's cavalier misuse of it; the moral failings he sought to excoriate can hardly serve as a political primer of the Merovingian kingdom for the edification of modern readers.

New readings of Gregory recognizing a purposeful narrative of his political world alter the significance of the account he gives.[7] But by no means do they destroy the value of it; they merely change the way we approach his evidence. A recent, it seems to me feigned, concern that recognition of the artfulness of Gregory's narrative vitiates its historical value amounts to an overwrought rejection of a simple message and an ultimately failing effort to preserve early medieval sources as repositories of archaic data.[8]

Gregory's works, especially his *Histories*, retain their importance as sources for many aspects of 6th-century history. But they have to be read critically and in conjunction with other, sometimes reasonably extensive, sources of 6th-century, and more broadly Merovingian, political and legal institutions. The

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6 Lot's comment may be intended as a riposte to the old patriotic view of French/Frankish kings as represented by the great scholar Ruinart (*PL* 71, § 15), for all his life a subject of Louis XIV, "non supercilio in populos, veluti orientales reges qui a popularibus suis adorari consueverunt … sed amore in populos, et mutuo popularium in regem amore, qui in Francorum cordibus a natura insitus videtur."

7 See above, ch. 3, at n. 16.

8 This is part of the strategic positioning of the Vienna school. (For my view of its program, see Alexander Callander Murray, "Reinhard Wenskus on 'Ethnogenesis,' Ethnicity, and the Origin of the Franks," in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, (ed.) Andrew Gillett, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 4 [Turnhout, 2002], 39–68.) But real discomfort is shown by others: see Richard Gerberding's (not always accurate) review of Martin Heinzelmann's *Gregor von Tours "Zehn Bücher Geschichte": Historiographie und Gesellschaftskonzept im 6. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1994), in *Speculum* 71/4 (1996), 959–6; the solution to the problem he creates for himself, namely to rely on 7th- and 8th-century epitomes, could only appeal to a Carolingianist.

towering significance of Gregory's history remains, but it is not the only source for the face of the Merovingian state as depicted in its text.

6.2　　The Sources for the World of Gregory

What are the sources for the profane structures of Gregory's world and more generally for the Merovingian period as a whole? The distribution and content of sources relevant to our subject have a distinct profile.

From the 6th century there is, in addition to the works of Gregory and, it is well to remember, his friend Venantius Fortunatus, a significant body of legal material. Legislation in the form of directives in a more or less general form (that is, edicts or constitutions), some of which at least are the product of magnate assemblies under the direction of kings, exist for many of Gregory's kings. Clovis, Childebert I, Chlothar I, Chilperic, Guntram, Childebert II, and Chlothar II, are all represented by examples of legislation, usually multiple.[9]

A rich ecclesiastical counterpart of royal legislation are the canons of the Merovingian councils intended to regulate the church and the christian community; these councils usually met under the auspices of kings.[10] Gregory, among other mentions of councils, highlights the disagreement between Childebert II (with Gregory as his spokesman) and Guntram of Burgundy on the advisability of inter-kingdom meetings of groups of bishops (*Hist.* 9.20). Correspondence, surprisingly abundant is gathered in Merovingian and modern collections and covers most of the fifth to eighth centuries, though in a sporadic fashion. This includes an important collection of diplomatic communications, *Epistolae Austrasicae*, brought together in the court of Childebert II.[11]

There are also law codes for the sixth century. For the north-west of the kingdom, the code of the Salian Franks (*Lex Salica*) survives from the early part

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9　　The standard collection is, *Capitularia regum Francorum*, (ed.) Alfred Boretius, MGH Capitularia 1 (Hanover, 1883. But see also n. 93 for the *Praeceptio Chlotharii*.

10　　*Concilia aevi Merovingici*, (ed.) Friedrich Maassen, MGH LL 1, Concilia 1 (Hanover, 1883); and cf. the edition of Charles de Clerq, CCSL 149 (Tournhout, 1963). A new fundamental survey of the subject in English now exists: Gregory I. Halfond, *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, AD 511–768,* Medieval Law and its Practice 6 (Leiden, 2010). And see below at ch. 7 and 12.3.2.

11　　*Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, MGH Epistolae 3 (Berlin, 1892), for most of them. Some individual letters come from other collections. For an overview of sources, and discussion of select themes, see Vida Alice Tyrrell, *Merovingian Letters and Letter Writers*, PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2012, esp. 10–24, 270–524.

of the century and, for the middle Rhineland, perhaps the earlier stages of *Lex Ribvaria*, a kind of *Lex Salica revisa*, that was used by the Austrasian Franks and completed in the following century.[12] In the south, codes compiled prior to the Frankish conquest were still used: the so-called *Lex Burgundionum*, first issued, as Gregory seems to note (*Hist.* 2.33), by Gundobad, and the Breviary of Alaric, which was a version of the Theodosian Code issued by the Visigothic king prior to his defeat at Vouillé.[13] This code was studied in Gregory's day, as he himself remarks in passing, and may have been an adjunct of literary culture.[14] In interpreting the Roman-based law of the Frankish kingdom, however, it is important to recognize that it was also a living law, not simply a reflection of textbook guidelines and jurist constructs.[15] And it could, to confound us all, differ only by a whisker from Frankish practice.[16]

There are distinctive problems with the interpretation of all of these sources, the discussion of which would take us too far afield. But I will make a few observations about *Lex Salica* in relation to Gregory, in part because this most celebrated of early law codes is the one most poorly understood, and in part because significance is often drawn from the alleged disconnection between the world it reflects and the society Gregory seems to describe.[17] For all its importance the code would be far more useful if we knew the precise date and circumstance of its composition. The code is early: the first decades of 6th century for the earliest redaction is a harmless, unobjectionable conjecture. The common scholarly assumption that Clovis issued it is something else. There is

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12   *Lex Salica*: *Pactus legis Salicae*, (ed.) Karl August Eckhardt, MGH LL NG 4.1, and idem *Lex Salica* MGH LL NG 4.2 (references in this paper are all found in 4.1). *Lex Ribvaria*, (eds.) Franz Beyerle and Rudolf Buchner, MGH LL NG 3.2.

13   *Leges Burgundionum*, (ed.) Ludwig von Salis, MGH LL NG 2.1; *Lex Romana Visigothorum,* (ed.) G. Haenel (Berlin, 1849).

14   In the story of Andarchius, the slave of Felix of Marseilles, who outshone his master in literary studies, including the *legis Theodosianae libri* (*Hist* 4.46). Due to the patronage of Duke Lupus, he gained a spot (*locus militandi*) in the administration of Sigibert. Roman law is likely the context for the legal learning of the Burgundian Patrician Celsus (*Hist.* 4.24). The code was still an object of study in the following century: *Vita Desiderii* 1, MGH SRM 4; *Vita Boniti* 2 MGH SRM 6. There is a common theme of royal service in all the references. For the explicit use of the Theodosian code in a pleading before a royal tribunal of Childeric II, see the *Vita Praejecti* 24, (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 5.

15   See Murray, *"Pax"* (as a in n. 4), 283 in a broader context.

16   For an example, Murray, *Germanic Kinship* (as in next note), 194, n. 4.

17   To get a sense of the complexity of *Lex Salicia*, consult the editions by Eckhardt (see n. 11) or even J.H. Hessels, *Lex Salica: The Ten Texts with Glosses and the Lex Emendata* (London, 1880), and Alexander Callander Murray, *Germanic Kinship Structure: Studies in Law and Society in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1983), esp. 119–133. And see below, n. 19.

no evidence he had a hand in its production and the code as we have it (in multiple redactions) does not come provided with the usual bureaucratic apparatus that would connect it to royal legislative activity, despite strained efforts to argue otherwise. Clovis is a possible candidate as its author (or instigator) but that is hardly grounds for the firm attributions that appear over and over again in modern scholarship. The code needs to be read *first* without assuming a particular political or institutional context for its compilation, and (though there is no space to argue this point at length) without supposing it encapsulated archaic 'tribal' or 'Germanic' custom.[18] It is Frankish law in a narrow sense, and without prejudging the sources of that law; more importantly, it shows us Frankish procedure, elements of which are reflected throughout Gaul at various times – but that does not necessarily take us back very far. It is a code in name (as a collection of laws), but whether it ever functioned in Gregory's period, or even the 7th-century as a widespread, officially sanctioned source of law, is quite another question.[19] The first clear reference to *Lex Salica*

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18   Murray, *Kinship*, 116–118; and in a broader context, P.S. Barnwell, "Emperors, Jurists and Kings: Law and Custom in the Late Roman and Early Medieval West," *Past and Present* 168 (2000), 6–29. For selections in English, see Alexander Callander Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader* (Peterborough, Ont., 1999), 533–556.

19   *Lex Salica* constitutes a complicated series of texts and manuscripts; the literature on it is extensive. Its problems do not really lend themselves to the quick fix. Ian Wood's attempt in two paragraphs (*The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* [London, 1994] 113–114) to establish around 673 a new, official, recension by Bishop Leudegar not only of *Lex Salica* but also of the other codes of the Frankish kingdoms misreads the sources and does neither the texts nor the literature justice. King lists, of which there is no shortage, are not records of validations of codes by monarchs, as Wood interprets them; they are king lists. The manuscript that Wood fingers as preserving the Leudegarian recension is A2, which is not a separate recension at all but simply a distinctive manuscript of the earliest A recension. The testimony of the *Passio Leudegari II* (Wood's principal evidence for a revision by Leudegar) is a later version (very possibly Carolingian) of an original *Passio Leudegari I* c.7. It is not an independent witness, says nothing about codes, and merely gives a tendentious reworking of *Passio I's* account of Childeric II sending out reforming edicts to the three kingdoms (Neustria, Austrasia, Burgundy) in an effort to confirm earlier principles of the relationship between the regions and the monarchy – the reference point at least notionally is again, not a code, but the Edict of Paris a. 614; the *Passio II* tries to tie authorship of these edicts to Leudegar. See MGH SRM 5 for both *passiones*; and for the historiography of the various versions and their interrelation, Paul Fouracre and Richard Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Historiography 640–720* (Manchester 1996), 194–196, 206–208; for the Edict of Paris, see Alexander Callander Murray, "Immunity, Nobility, and the Edict of Paris," *Speculum* 69 (1994), 18–39.

as a code, as opposed to *lex Salica* as identifiable practices, comes in late 8th-century formulae.[20]

As to the disjunction with the world of Gregory, four points need to be taken into consideration. (1) The different terms used for officials in *Lex Salica* and the overwhelming majority of Merovingian Gallic sources, including Gregory (see below for the term equivalent to the Latin *comes*) clearly suggest a distinct linguistic community for the code (despite its Latinity) and the territory whose customs it reflects. (2) Gregory's eye fell on the Gallic regions unequally. The northern regions where we suppose the practices of *Lex Salica* might have prevailed hardly fell within his horizon of detailed narrative. Nevertheless, the influence of legal forms found in *Lex Salica* is demonstrable in Gregory's world, though (and even in *Lex Ribvaria*) hardly in the pristine form of the original collection. (3) *Lex Salica* seems to reflect the world of well-to-do, slave-holding, freemen farmers. Such groups are not foreign to the Roman world out of which Frankish Gaul emerged. It is an open question whether such groups were altogether alien to the experience of the Bishop of Tours. For example groups of Saxons had been around since the 5th century and were still an identifiable group in his own day, though Gregory is unlikely to have experienced them *in situ*; so too were the Theifali settled in Poitou, an area to which Gregory was hardly a stranger.[21] (4) Gregory's views were not only constrained geographically but also socially. Though non-elites, including modest freemen and even slaves are established parts of Gregory's landscape and are supporting actors especially, though not exclusively, in his hagiographical works, they rarely excite anything that could support a sociological treatment. The world of *Lex Salica*, or something like it in regions with which Gregory was familiar, is largely outside the purview of the kind of writing making up the *Histories* and the hagiography. Whether or not Gregory was the least bit aware of such a collection, *Lex Salica* in its earliest redaction may have already become an artefact of largely antiquarian interest by his day – and so eventually of national interest by the 8th century.[22]

As just noted, however, elements of Frankish procedure (sometimes first attested in some form in *Lex Salica*) by necessity were not mere antiquarian

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20   Murray, *Kinship*, 131–132; and more broadly, Patrick Wormald, "*Lex scripta* and *verbum regis*: Legislation and Germanic Kingship, from Euric to Cnut," in *Early Medieval Kingship*, (eds.) P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds, 1977), 121–123.

21   Saxons: *Hist.* 2.18, 19; 5.26; 10.9. Theifali in Poitou: *Hist.* 4.18 (where they killed the duke set over them called Austrapius); Saint Senoch, *Hist.* 5.7.

22   The persistent assumption that the Merovingian redactions of our manuscripts must have been officially sanctioned (the assumption of Eckhardt's edition, see n. 12 above) continues to be held despite the lack of any textual evidence that such was the case.

survival. They were part of the fabric of the legal world that occasionally bubbles through Gregory's narrative. They should not be exaggerated, but they are there and worth noting because they are reflected in other sources with an otherwise clear Roman-law bias. The failed case against the murderers of Armentarius, for example, reflects Frankish practices on establishing default.[23] The presence of Salic law procedural elements can sometimes be subtle. *VM* 4.11, about an event in 589, describes a process well documented in the subsequent charter record. A childless couple of Chartres, Blederic and his wife, made over to Saint Martin's church their property, retaining a life usufruct. This was done using the conventional written instruments of the time. The curious element in the story is the donor's insistence that the transfer be done in his house and that the representative of the church remain overnight, both of which look like a reflection of the Salic law conveyance of property in the case of childlessness.[24]

The source profile as described to this point changes thoroughly in the course of the 7th century. This change is not irrelevant to the students of Gregory because it affects general interpretations of the Merovingians, especially those projected from the Carolingian period, and extends the repertoire of useful sources that have a bearing on the 6th century. In the early 7th century the legislative record of the Merovingian kings in our sources rapidly fades away; Chlothar II, Fredegund's son, is the last name to be attached to surviving legislation. New canon law legislation fades too. Secular codification continues but, apart from the completion of *Lex Ribvaria*, only for regions outside Gaul. Sadly there is no successor to Gregory – nor will there be for a very long time – who brings us a dense, personal narrative comparable to that of the bishop of Tours. The 7th century *stricto sensu* provides us with the interesting, if limited, work of the historiographer known as Fredegar, whose approximately contemporary account of events stops at a. 640, about two decades before he was writing. In the early 8th century, the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* (*LHF*), the first real author of a 'History of the Franks,' provides a brief, often

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23   The Franco-Latin technical term for failure to appear at a tribunal (not used by Gregory) is *solsatire/solsadire*: LS 73; in one form or another it is frequent in the formularies.

24   LS 46 *De acfatmire*, often interpreted as a form of adoption, though it is a conveyance and donation no matter what other requirements may need to be in place. A central element of the procedure, to be vouched for by witnesses, is the beneficiary's stay in the donor's house. The version in *Lex Ribvaria* (c. 50) supposes just written documents and witnesses (though it doesn't exclude the beneficiary's stay). According to Gregory, after the donation Saint Martin blessed the couple with children, a possibility their donation agreement should have anticipated, though Gregory assures us Blederic kept his original promise, providing other properties to his new children.

shaky account of events from the mid 7th century to the ascendency of Charles Martel, whose name provides the dynastic name Carolingian. The *LHF*'s treatment of historical romances about the characters of Gregory's history are fascinating in their own right (and should be read by all students of Gregory) but are hardly guides to the events of the 5th or 6th century, merely their interpretation in the 8th. All in all, the narrative record is meagre. And though a handful of saints' lives composed relatively close to the times of their subject can supplement this narrative with interesting insights about the functioning of political structures, and courts, there is simply no source comparable in scope and detail to the works of Gregory.

There are however new categories of sources that have survived from the 7th century and they are not irrelevant to interpreting the 6th. As the legislative record ends at the beginning of the 7th century, the royal charter record begins. Records of private charters, not unknown from the 6th century, remain scant, but the diplomas, the modern term for the charters of kings documenting grants of property and privileges, gradually become a substantial source for the functioning of the monarchy and its officials and, given the nature of the archives preserving the charters, its policies towards ecclesiastical establishments. The large number of post-Merovingian forged specimens among the corpus – over one half are spurious to a significant degree – detracts from the historical value of this apparent historical windfall and complicates mightily the interpretation of diploma contents. There are enough original survivals from the period, however, and reasonably genuine copies from later ages, to serve as an uneasy guide to pilot the brave or foolhardy through the waters of diploma study. The particular contents of these charters cannot be assumed to have been in vogue in the 6th century, an assumption that has frequently led astray interpretation of earlier royal institutions.[25]

Finally there is one other body of sources, central to the kind of diplomatic study just referred to, as well as general issues of institutions, law, property, and society in the Merovingian period. These are the formularies, collections of legal formulae, often based on real models, to be used by notaries in the drawing up of legal documents of all description, private and public.[26] The most

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25　An evaluation of some of the issues of diploma study can be found in the review article of Alexander Callander Murray, "The New MGH Edition of the Charters of the Merovingian Kings," in *Journal of Medieval Latin* 15 (2005), 246–278.

26　These are recently the subject of a monograph and sound translations in English: Alice Rio, *Legal Practice and the Written Word in the Early Middle Ages: Frankish Formulae, c. 500–1000* (Cambridge, 2008); and *The Formularies of Angers and Marculf: Two Merovingian Legal Handbooks*, TTH (Liverpool, 2008).

famous is the Formulary of Marculf ca 700; there are others from the late
Merovingian (Angers and Clermont, all within Gregory's horizon) and early
Carolingian periods, including one from Tours. The legal world of the formular-
ies is overwhelmingly the Roman-law derived practices of the Gallic cities,
though the influence of Frankish law, sometimes difficult to discern because it
might only differ subtly from Roman norms, is not absent. Given their continu-
ity (which does not exclude development and change) with early post-Roman
conditions, these are serious sources for fleshing out the late 6th-century world
of the bishop of Tours.

The grim list of seventh-century sources, especially the lack of major narra-
tives, and the skewed picture it produces when set against the 6th century,
accounts for much that is wrong with interpretation of the Merovingian pre-
amble to the Carolingians. Efforts to account for the profile as the objective
reflection of institutional shifts and political events within the kingdom, in my
opinion, do not work.[27] The movement in the source base from legislation to
charter is likely due to the mere serendipity of historical survival over a very
long period of time, not the intrinsic character of the 6th and 7th centuries. We
know that charters were granted under Gregory's monarchs, just as legislation
was issued under their successors. The precise character of the contents is
what often eludes us.

What remains to be done is to give readers of Gregory some idea of the insti-
tutional world in which he lived and of which, of course, he assumed his readers
were well aware when he produced his narrative. What is presented here is not
a constitutional or institutional history (*Verfassungsgeschichte* to the last gen-
erations of German historians, *Rechtsgeschichte* to their predecessors) includ-
ing the legal and sociological dimension of private law, encompassing family,
dependency, and property. For obvious reasons, it cannot have this scope;
whether or not such a beast can be created at this juncture in the historiography

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27   Theo Kölzer, Introduction, *Die Urkunden der Merowinger*, MGH Diplomata regum
      Francorum e stirpe Merovingica, 2 vol. (2001), 1: xiii–xiv, and critique by Murray, "New
      MGH Edition of the Charters of the Merovingian Kings," esp. 253–261. Kölzer's picture is
      accompanied by an overwrought assessment of the civil wars of Gregory's time. The
      countryside was always open to pillaging but too much has been made of the destructive
      consequences of the civil wars on the urban centres that may very well pale in particular
      instances before the internal mayhem of the Roman period; see Dey, "Art, Ceremony, and
      City Walls" (as at n. 66, below), 8 and n. 16. Gregory's perception of internal rampaging
      Frankish armies (*Hist*. 6.31) acting "sicut solet contra inimicos" echoes Cassius Dio's eye-
      witness account of Severus' treatment of Byzantium (75.14).

of the Merovingian kingdom is another question.[28] What is offered here is rather a simple sketch of the public face of the Merovingian state in which Gregory moved, with some modern reflections on the derivation of prevalent forms that should help contextualize his narrative.

6.3   Merovingian Kingship

One should, I suppose, begin with Merovingian kingship itself. Even casual readers of Gregory will have noticed that the bishop regarded the origins of Frankish kingship with some uncertainty. In his search to document the earliest existence of Frankish kings he has left us valuable sources of which we would otherwise know nothing: the histories of Sulpicius Alexander and Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus (*Hist.* 2.9). But he was unaware of sources to which we are privy and which are our earliest references to the Franks; there, from the outset as it were, appear references to their kings. The earliest reference to the Franks in the *Panegyrici Latini* mention their kings as both allies and as enemies, already executed it so happens, and accompanied by large numbers of their followers wearing out the beasts in the arena at Trier.[29] These are the earliest references to the Frankish kings and the Franks themselves, and the dual role ascribed to the Franks in the panegyrics, as tendentious as they are, reflects their role in sources for the next two centuries. The use of 'Frankish' in this context, however, is not at all transparent. The term *Franci*, though hardly a novelty in the late 3rd-century sources where it first appears, is a new, generic designation for various ethnic groups along the lower Rhine. The term is Germanic, and historians in lock step tend to assume that it was the name of a confederation at some indeterminate point, but in fact there are various ways to account for the widespread use of a generic name in Roman sources (around the same time we find *Picti*, *Alamanni*, and *Gothi*) and there is no way of knowing whether the currency of the term *Franci* was due to the peoples of the lower Rhine themselves or the Romans. The relation, if any,

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28   The closest thing, apart from the old, dated German and French handbooks, is Margarete Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte der Merowingerzeit nach den Werken Gregors von Tours*, 2 vols, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Monographien 3 (Mainz 1981–82), an invaluable synoptic arrangement of Gregory's work around the main topics of traditional constitutional history.

29   *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*, trans. C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers (Berkeley, 1994), nos. 6, 8, 10, 12. The relevant passages, with other early sources are collected in Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, 1–20.

between these early kings and the late 5th and 6th century Merovingians is unknowable.

Merovingian kingship begins, following Gregory, with Merovechus/ Meroveus, father of Childeric and grandfather of Clovis, a sequence that places the founder of the line in the mid 5th century.[30] The dynastic name 'Merovingian' flows naturally from Clovis' grandfather's name. It is worth noting that it was never used by Gregory, but it surely was current in his time and accounts for the popularity of what turned out to be the rather ill-fated, and repeated name of Merovech in the times of Chilperic and Chlothar II.[31]

Gregory's attempts to record the beginnings of Frankish and Merovingian kingship, though they seem sincere and focussed, have been found insufficient to succeeding narrators, both medieval and modern, who expect more from their Franks; so Gregory's account has been enlarged, sometimes entertainingly it must be admitted, but in the end without the substance that could serve for historical reconstruction. For example, in the succeeding century interest turned as much to the origin of the Franks as a people as to their kings. Gregory's meagre and halting account of early kings was straightened out and the Franks and their kings were provided with distant origins as Trojan exiles, fleeing the destruction of the city under their first king, Priam. The legend of Trojan origins, a Greek historiographical invention that had already serviced the self esteem of a number of western peoples, hereafter became a standard component of Frankish history for almost the next millennium.

Modern efforts to expand Gregory's account are hardly less fanciful. Taking their cue from Remigius' famous address to Clovis as "Sicamber," some scholars have sought to derive the Franks, or just the Merovingian dynasty, from the Sugambri, a 1st-century people annihilated by the Romans. Others have looked for more northern origins. Deploying asterisk philology, uncritical and selective handling of the sources, and an unwholesome sense of national identity, Reinhard Wenskus sought to provide the Merovingians with a more suitably Nordic origin, tracing the dynasty's genesis to the Chauci, a people noted in early imperial sources as inhabiting the North Sea coast. This argument was part of a broader strategy of establishing the Merovingians as representatives of an archaic type of Germanic pagan sacral kingship.[32]

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30   In *Hist*. 2.9. Gregory explicitly does *not* trace Merovech's descent from Chlodio/Chlogio.

31   See Murray, "*Post vocantur*" as at n. 34, below, 145–146. Basina and Clovis are also names of Gregory's time evoking the early dynasty.

32   Murray, "Reinhard Wenskus on 'Ethnogenesis,' Ethnicity and the Origin of the Franks," 39–68; for the Sugambri, 61.

This discussion of early Frankish kingship may seem to have taken us far afield from understanding the realities of rule in the 6th century. But with sacral kingship, namely the notion that kings claimed divine descent, buttressing their legitimacy and role as intermediaries between their people and the gods, we come to a scholarly concept that deeply affects how we understand the character of Merovingian rule, the role of the kings as rulers, and the relation of Merovingian kingship to that of the succeeding Carolingians.[33]

Sacral kingship is a scholarly construct.[34] It is not a product of the sources but of a conviction, innocent enough in some forms, less so in others, about the character of archaic society and the role of religion in shaping its political forms. Why such a putative archaic society should be a model for the Merovingian period is never adequately explained, other than by another assumption, namely that Merovingian kingship, and by implication the institutions connected with it, were 'Germanic.' Proponents of sacral kingship are not believers in Occam's razor. As the disjointed scraps of evidence offered up to demonstrate the truth of the theory have been refuted, and contextualized sufficiently to eliminate fanciful notions of sacrality or royal divine descent, its champions repeat what may become their battle cry: but there *must* be something else to the sources, meaning scraps of a primitive myth or pagan practices. Late Antiquity and the Merovingian period are the Valhalla of historical studies. Ideas are done in, but rise again another day. Sacral kingship is not likely to go away entirely, but it exists in a realm outside empirical history and, at least for the moment, hardly excites the affirmation of most scholars studying the period.[35]

Sacral kingship is not a key to anything about the Merovingian kingdom, but rather a distraction to the rich testimony of its sources. There was nothing pagan about Merovingian kingship. It was deeply connected to the Christian

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33   Supposing the movement from a pagan sacral kingship of the Merovingians to a Christian sacred kingship and *imperium* of the Carolingians (conveniently accompanied with anointing) is a thoroughly distorting template that still underlies some modern interpretations.

34   The Merovingian material is discussed in Alexander Callander Murray, "*Post vocantur Merohingii*: Fredegar, Merovech and 'Sacral Kingship,'" in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History, Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, (ed.) Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto, 1998), 121–152.

35   There is a recent tendency to abandon (that is, avoid) source criticism, and go for universal archaic models, apparently provided by African kingship! As an example see the fantastical world reconstructed by Régine Le Jan, "La sacralité de la royauté mérovingienne," *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, (2003/6), 1217–1241, wherein, i.a., the assassination of Chilperic emerges as the sacrifice of a sacred king. Margaret Murray might approve.

church, imbued from the beginning – as attested in the very earliest of our sources – with the teachings of Christian rulership, and lectured on such, even excommunicated, when it failed to pass muster.[36] Though the language of Gregory and his contemporaries assumed and encouraged the Christian sensibilities of its kings, and reflects the common view that God was ultimately the dispenser of authority over His people, Merovingian kingship itself, nevertheless, like that of contemporary states, was essentially a secular institution. The institutions over which it presided were not unaffected by the Frankish forms and practices, especially in procedural matters, of the late imperial Frankish settlements of northern Gaul, as has already been noted. But the overwhelming conditions that shaped the Merovingian state were the late – sometimes *very* late – practices of the Roman Gallic provinces and cities at the time of their integration into the Merovingian state.

6.4 'Frankish' versus 'Germanic' Institutions

In speaking of a specific range of institutions, I say Frankish, not Germanic, pointedly. The former term is descriptive, does not pre-judge the ultimate source of the law, and refers to and limits its scope to historically known conditions, even if they are not at all well understood. The latter term in legal and institutional terms refers to an abstract, inferred, model of practices held to be in effect across a wide linguistic and cultural community at various indefinite points in time and space. The linguistic model of 'Germanic' rarely justifies the cultural presuppositions that have long indiscriminately accompanied it.[37]

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36 A smattering of texts: the letter of Remigius to the young Clovis, *Epistolae Austrasicae* no. 2, (ed.) W. Grundlach MGH Epistolae 3.1, with Emendata by Bruno Krusch, 719–720, and cf. ibid. *Epistolae aevi Merowingici collectae* no. 15; excommunication of Charibert, *Hist.* 4.26; speech from and to Guntram *Hist.* 8.30. *Hist.* 10.16 provides the preamble to a judgment: "piis atque catholicis populo datis principibus quibus concessa est regio" – from Clovis onwards the Merovingians, no matter how badly they behaved, never failed this criterion. Chilperic's notions, however one interprets them, never ventured off the paths provided by Christian thought. See more generally Yitzhak Hen, "The Christianisation of Kingship," in *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Errinerung*, (eds.) Jörg Jarnut and Mathias Becher (Münster, 2004), 163–177. The emphasis on the distinctive character of the 7th century here is, I think, a little exaggerated.

37 The model of course has also been accompanied by a racial component, a convention – and sometimes it is only that – apparently difficult to escape: a recent example is Peter Heather's notion that Zosimus' description of Radagaisus' force as a mixture of Celts and

In a Frankish context, the model as applied to institutions is of negligible value and often distorting.

The term Frankish has as a consequence to do multiple duties, serving as a general term for the kingdom of the Merovingians with all its diversity, for the ethnic Franks within the kingdom – a sociological concept, real enough but ever changing in its reality – and for the distinctive practices derived from legal forms of that community. This circumstance is at least in general terms less complicated than it sounds. The context of particular uses of the term is almost always obvious.

6.5   Administration

A conventional and useful way of looking at any administrative system is to distinguish between its central and regional forms – in Merovingian terms, the palace and the cities, or regional administration.[38] Three fundamental points should be kept in mind about the way Gregory chose his representation of them. First he took much for granted on the part of his reader and had no interest in describing structural features of Merovingian governance; we deduce what we can from incidental aspects of this narrative. Second, his narrative fell, it seems, unequally on the activities of the courts and the events of the cities, especially, but not only, Tours and Clermont. Gregory obviously knew the cities best but he was still an intimate of the courts of Chilperic and Childebert and had good knowledge of that of Guntram. This knowledge informs his judgment, but not always the narrative detail. And thirdly, his sensibility as a recorder of contemporary affairs, despite an interest in locality, responded most to the actions of important players. The thrust of his narrative had little time for allusions to low-level actors in the apparatus of the kings and their top officials. No attempt is made here to discuss every term of official position that appears in Merovingian sources, merely those offices that allow a sketch of the main administrative features of the kingdoms.

Germans shows that his army was "multi-racial" (*The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* [Oxford, 2006], 194). There is probably a two-fold error here.

38   The distinction is the basis for Marculf organizing charters in his Formulary (n. 26, above): "tam in palatio et in pago," MGH Formulae, (ed.) Karolus Zeumer, *praefatio* and contents of Books 1 and 2. The phrase is used in other formulae in the same way. A synonym of *pagus* is *civitas* (see below, p. 213). Cf. the English phrase 'court and country.'

6.5.1　*The Officials of the Palace*

The palace is an obvious presence in Gregory's historical narrative, especially those parts dealing with the minority of Childebert II, when the king was under the guardianship of magnates, and when factions competed for control of the king.[39] Though some figures are prominent in the political actions of those years (but not the guardians of Childebert II), the character of the Austrasian palace is barely hinted at; the same is true of the Chilperic years, a time, though, when a king, and queen, were the centre of royal actions. Gregory's narrative, of course, does mention many palace officials by name with an accompanying title of varying degrees of specificity. The problems of interpretation are formidable. The semantics of terminological usage have not yet been rigorously worked out and may always escape our understanding. Terms may embrace the designation of ranks or offices or both (this seems true where personal names are used) or may be descriptive terms, especially where groups of officials are referred to. The hierarchy of offices and ranks, and therefore their relative importance, and the career path of their holders are imperfectly known. Scholars have as a consequence inferred varied hierarchies and functional divisions among them.[40] To complicate matters, some ranks were almost certainly found in both the regional and central administration. Even high offices had a plurality of holders, confounding our understanding of the hierarchy and the relative status of general terms of office.[41] And the palace administrations of the kings was paralleled by that of the queen; the ranks in both tracks were hardly considered equivalencies, even if the king at the end of the day could wilfully dispose of all of them if he so wished.

Gregory used a limited number of general terms for the really important circle around the king who participated in decision making. Probably the most specific, to judge by its repeated usage and narrow semantic context is *proceres*, commonly found, as it happens, in an Austrasian context, and in the case

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39   Only one guardian (*nutritor/nutricius*) at a time is mentioned for Childebert – Gogo and his successor Wandelenus (*Hist*. 5.46; 6.1). The plural, *nutritores*, is used for guardians during the minorities of Chlodomer's sons and for Chlothar II (*Hist*. 3.18; 8.9).

40   See for example, Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1: 24, 90 with n. 180.

41   Administrative offices that are probably in context relatively modest are clearly referred to in the plural: *cancellarii* (*VM* 4.28), secretaries; *camerarii* (*Hist*. 4.26), financial officers; *thesaurarii* (*Hist*. 7.5), treasury officials. But the pattern is repeated further up the hierarchy: *domestici* (*Hist*. 9.36), *comites* within the palace (9.36). *Cubicularii,* chamberlains, closely connected with the royal person at least etymologically*,* almost certainly existed in multiple numbers (cf. *Hist*. 10.10), and multiple *referendarii* (heads of the *cancellarii*) clearly existed in the 7th century, as did *comites palatii*, who again in the seventh century had important judicial functions in proceedings before the king's court.

of an embassy led by Egidius during Childebert's minority modified as *primi proceres*. *Proceres* is also the term used for officials involved along with bishops in negotiating the Treaty of Andelot between Austrasia and Burgundy.[42] The term is commonly used to describe members of the tribunal in 7th-century judgments of the king's court; *optimates* is a common synonym. In Gregory a synonym, though with a broader semantic field, is the comparative adjectival term, *seniores*, used in similar contexts.[43] The use of a comparative adjective in the same way is *maiores*, generally modified by the ablative *natu*.[44] Does *maiores natu* mean 'greater by birth' in the sense of nobles or does it have its conventional classical meaning 'greater by age,' that is 'older' and in the plural 'elders,' and therefore literally *seniores*, which of course could mean lords or nobles! Etymology as a starting point for these terms is but a poor guide to their meaning *in situ*. They referred to the great men – magnates is one English term for them – whether their position was ultimately based on birth and privilege (as surely was the case for most of them) or only royal service. A source, to be discussed below, seems to call the same group *potentes,* a term meaning 'the powerful'; this word was used in the late empire, generally referring to officials, and continues to surface in Merovingian sources. In contexts where Gregory notes the role of the *proceres* (or similar terms) in important decision making, they are almost always accompanied by *episcopi*, bishops. Merovingian legislation shows the same conjunction.

Gregory gives only one brief general description of a court. In 589 important military residents of Soissons and Meaux asked Childebert II to send one of his sons to rule them directly. Childebert sent them Theudebert and appointed the officials that would make up his court: *comites, domestici, maiores,* and *nutricii*, as well as "everyone who was essential for providing royal service" (*Hist.* 9.36).

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42   *Hist.* 4.5 for the group responsible for decisions during the minority of Theodebald; 5.16, for the group around Childebert at the meeting at Stonebridge; 6.3, for members of Egidius' embassy to Chilperic; 9.20, Treaty of Andelot. In similar, important decision-making contexts: *Hist.* 5.46; 8.21; 9.8. These instances account for all the uses of the term in Gregory. It is found in other sources.

43   *Hist.* 4.27 (context is vague, important, but social); 6.24, surely a direct synonym with *proceres*; 6.31 (analogous to 9.20); 6.31, mutiny against Egidius and those around him; 7.33, those of Childebert's kingdom knowledgeable of the plot supporting Gundovald; 7.36, authors of a letter to Theodore giving him orders regarding Gundovald (synonym, *principes*). *Seniores*, as a comparative adjective, is also used widely as a term for leading municipal officials, and in the singular as a term for a leader of any enterprise.

44   *Hist.* 6.24 shows *maiores* (though without *natu*) as a synonym of *seniores* in the same sense as *proceres*. For the full phrase in a similar context *Hist.* 7.32; and as the principle judicial consultants along with bishops: *Hist.* 8.30.

The plural counts (*comites*) may be a general term for important office holders or may serve to cover the two offices (in the singular or the plural) of the count of the palace (*comes palatii*) and count of the stable (*comes stabuli*). The *domestici* in the palace were responsible for running and provisioning the household. The *nutricii* were those responsible for the upbringing of the young king, who was only four years old at the time.[45]

The following are the great offices of the palace, with the names of some holders prominent in Gregory's narrative:

Cubicularius, chamberlain. Charegyselus, obviously an important figure in the court, was assassinated alongside Sigibert. Gregory accuses him of breaking wills (probably meaning those of ecclesiastics or donors to the church), but whether he did that as a consequence of the judicial powers of his office or in an advisory capacity to the king or delegated judge, is not clear. The names of several other *cubicularii* are given, notably Eberulf, who sought the asylum of Saint Martin's on Chilperic's death after spurning Fredegund, and Chundo, who was stoned to death by order of Guntram after a failed judicial duel in the Vosges.[46]

Comes stabuli, count of the stable. A rogues gallery: Chuppa, serving Chilperic; Sunnegisil, implicated in a plot against Childebert, Brunhild, and Faileuba; and of course Leudast while in service to the Queen Marcovefa.[47]

Comes palatii, count of the palace. All examples are Austrasians: Ciucilio, a supporter of Merovech, beheaded by Chilperic, and formerly in service to Sigibert (*Hist.* 5.18); Trudulf, killed in the battle of the Woëvre (*Hist.* 9.12); and Romulf, sent with a mayor of the palace to reassess the tax obligations of Poitiers (*Hist.* 9.30). There is no hint of the important judicial role that *comites palatii* played in the 7th century.[48]

Domestici. A certain Flavianus appears three times, in one instance in a clear judicial context where he presided over a royal tribunal that freed Chuppa and Animodus, after receiving bribes, according to Gregory.[49] Whether this role

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45   *Nutritores* is a synonym, and during minorities had a political (and by implication) legal significance; see above, at n. 39.

46   *Hist.* 4.51, 7.21, 10.10; see also 7.13 (Ebero) and 7.18 (Faraulfus).

47   *Hist.* 5.39, 5.47, 9.38, 10.5, 10.38.

48   For an attempt to sort out the kinds of pleadings before the 7th-century royal tribunal, see, Alexander Callander Murray, "So-called Fictitious Trial in the Merovingian *Placita*," in *Gallien in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Kulturegeschichte einer Region*, (eds.) Steffen Diefenback and Gernot Müller (Berlin, 2013), 297–327.

49   *Hist.* 9.9; 10.5; 10.15; and *PLRE* 3 Flavianus. The tribunal is said to be "in praesentia regis," but as is implied here, and shown in 7th-century judicial documents, the king need not be

reflected the job description of his post or delegation by the king is impossible to say. One might guess the latter and that Flavianus was one of those Gregory included among the *proceres*; other *domestici* need not have been so important.[50]

Referendarii. They were in charge of the writing office and involved in the drawing up of charters and orders; Otto, the former *referendarius*, testified that his signature, which appeared on the charters produced by Egidius at his trial, was forged. *Cancellarii* presumably constituted the staffs of *referendarii*. The royal signet ring used for sealing documents might be in the keeping of a *referendarius*. Those identified as *referendarii* by name in Gregory constitute a lengthy list. A dozen are mentioned, two or three being in the service of queens.[51] Their prominence in the narrative has probably less to do with the relative importance of the office in the court, though by any measure considerable, than the potential of the position to be a stepping stone to the episcopate. The position of bishop seems to have been the second to last resting place of a good number of *referendarii*, despite their lay status. About five of Gregory's *referendarii* became bishops, which of course is why we hear about them at all. Another former *referendarius* is noted as having become a priest.[52]

One other court official needs to be noted, not least because of his importance in the following century. Neither Gregory, nor any other 6th-century source, establishes clearly a single head of the court, apart from the king. But in the course of the 7th century this position was increasingly occupied by a singular mayor of the palace. The mayoralty eventually became the preserve of the Pippinid house and produced a new dynasty of kings called the Carolingians. But mayors are few and far between in 6th-century sources. Three are mentioned by name in Gregory, two of whom were the mayors of queens. The third, Badegislus, the first mayor of the palace for whom we have

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there, though he would receive a written report of the trial (in the 7th century at least vouched for by a *comes palatii*).

50   To complete the list: Leonardus former *domesticus* (*Hist.* 7.15), possibly attached to Fredegund but a receiver of a belt from Chilperic (cf. at n. 58, below), and Gundulf, Gregory's great uncle, a former *domesticus* who had obviously gone up in the world by becoming a duke (*dux*) – but his may have been a regional office.

51   *Hist.* 10.19 (Otto); 5.3 (Siggo, keeper of Sigibert's ring); *referendarii* of queens: 5.42 (Ursicinus); 7.32 (Bobolenus); and possibly 5.28 (Marcus, nearly lynched in Limoges, which was in Fredegund's endowment). *Cancellarius*: *VM* 4.28.

52   Bishops: *Hist.* 5.42 (Ursicinus) – he was elected, but it is questionable if he was ordained; 5.45 (Flavus); 8.39 (Licerius); 9.23 (Charimeris); 10.31 (Baudinus). Priest: *Hist.* 9.16 (Theuthar).

a name, was made bishop of Le Mans by Chlothar I – clearly a poor choice by Gregory's standards, and with a wife who was an even greater horror.[53]

Contemporaries no doubt had a good idea of the subtle and not so subtle distinctions in status implicated in the system of palatial ranks and offices. But our own sense of the gradations, and even functions, is rudimentary. The references of Gregory that could be construed as marking a career path are either fairly obvious or else confounded by some of the cross-tracks referred to above between palace (the households of the king and the queen) and regional administration.[54] The one place where Gregory does pointedly give the outline of a career, that of Leudast (*Hist.* 5.48), is presented as a servile burlesque of honourable advancement (from *culina,* to *pistillum,* to *cophinus*) until it hits, relatively speaking, the minor (*custos equorum meliorum*) and then major leagues (*comes stabuli* of Queen Marcovefa). Leudast is said to have "canvassed for" – the verb is *ambio* – the latter position. The king's service was the big step when, on the queen's death, Leudast, by Gregory's account, bought his way into the *comitatus* of Tours, an important position in the regional administration. Gregory's version of Leudast's career is tendentious but not likely to be inaccurate insofar as the details given, though there may be much left out, including Leudast's abilities.

There is however one text from Gregory's time that does give us an insight into the hierarchy of the palace and the career path it offered, though it fails, alas, as a key to unravelling the mysteries of preference and advancement. Fortunatus wrote a poem praising a certain palace official called Conda, who had served in the palace under Theuderic I (a. 511–33), Theudebert (a. 533–48), Theudebald (a. 548–55), Chlothar I (a. 555–61), and Sigibert.[55]

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53   The earliest mention of the office in the pre-conquest Burgundian palace is in the plural (*maiores domus*): LB Pr. Const. [5]; Extrav. 21.14. Mayors of queens: Waddo (*Hist.* 6.45; 7.27, 28); Florentianus (9.30; *VM* 4.6). Badegiselus (*Hist.* 6.9; 8.39).

54   Gregory's reference to Baudinus, bishop of Tours in 561, as a former *domesticus* (*Hist.* 4.31) and former *referendarius* (*Hist.* 10. 31) is probably no testament to a career path merely imperfect knowledge or memory on Gregory's part. A *referendarius* seems more likely than a *domesticus*, but one can never tell. The career of Waddo, prominent in the Gundovald revolt, is significant but rocky: from a regional administrator (count of Saintes), he became a mayor of the palace (*maior domus*) assigned the departing Queen Rigunth, which must surely have been a promotion, if such it really was, to hell.

         The career path of Gregory's kinsman Gundulf from *domesticus* to *dux* (*Hist.* 6.11) is not obvious and is complicated by our not knowing if these were regional or palace offices.

55   *Opera poetica* 7.16, MGH AA 4, (ed.) Fridericus Leo. Fortunatus' opening lines (1–4) imply all Conda's career was served in the palace but, it must be admitted, his language is designed for effect not clarity.

This resolutely Austrasian career it should be note is punctuated by uninterrupted service to the unitary king Chlothar I. Fortunatus' characterization of its course should be a motto for bureaucrats everywhere: "Kings have come and gone but you have retained your offices."[56] Conda, whose ancestry was modest, entered the palace of Theuderic at a young age.[57] The beginning of his rise was the position of tribune (*tribunus*) under Theuderic. Theudebert awarded him the honour of the *comitiva* – an honour that was originally invented by Constantine and came in several grades; it was still attached to various offices under the Merovingians.[58] The king also awarded him *cingula*, belts (possibly baldrics), as marks of esteem – merit badges, as it were. It is not clear what kind of *comes* Conda was or what his duties were. Still under Theudebert, the office of *domesticus* was added to the positions he had already earned, and the palace applauded its "watchful manager" (*vigil dispositor*).[59] During the reign of Theudebald we are told Conda played a guiding role in the king's minority and in preparing legislation, and under Chlothar I, he retained his authority in the palace, doing all this, it seems, with the title of *domesticus*. As a final reward, Sigibert promoted him to sit among the "outstanding *potentes*," thus advancing his rank to that of a companion, *conviva*, of the king.[60] By Fortunatus' writing then, Conda had obtained the office of *domesticus*, with the elevated rank of *conviva regis.* The latter term is never used by Gregory and was probably folded into his general descriptors like *proceres* or *seniores*.

Given the role of the palace in Gregory's narrative, this short, and inconclusive sketch must suffice for a moment; a longer, semantically-complicated historical exposition based on sources of disparate chronological provenance

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56   "Mutati reges, vos non mutastis honores," 7.16, line 35.

57   His relatively humble position is implied by the conceit that he and his posterity will bring prestige to his ancestry, and line 15: "a parvo incipiens...in altum." Cf. the obituary of Aredius, *Hist.* 10.29: "non mediocribus regionis suae ortus parentibus, sed valde ingenuus...Theodoberto regi traditus aulicis palatinis adiungitur." On the court as a focus for the education of (mainly noble) youth, see Wood, "Administration" (as at n. 94), 74–76, 79–81.

58   *Comes palatii, comes stabuli, comes civitatis.* This undoubtedly does not exhaust the list of its use.

59   The honours of office were retained, never lost, but added to, like modern degrees. A comparison with modern high political office and military ranks is also à propos. Gregory seems rigorous in the use of the prefix *ex* or its like for former office holders.

60   "iussit [*scil.* Sigiberchtus] et egregios inter residere potentes/convivam reddens proficiente gradu," lines 41–42. The term *conviva regis* appears also in *LS* 41.8, a controversial passage on wergelds, and in *LB* 38.2.

must await a different venue.[61] The regional administration, on the other hand, is far more important to Gregory's narrative and thanks to it, and other 6th-century sources, is much better understood.

6.5.2 *Regional Officials and their Administration*

Consideration of regional administration must begin by noting the basic territorial element of Merovingian governance, the building block, as it were, of the kingdoms and their administration, both secular and ecclesiastical. This was the Roman-era *civitas*, or city, composed of a built-up urban area, the town or city in a narrow sense, and the territory, occasionally extensive, subject to its jurisdiction.[62] By the late Roman period it had also become the focus of Christian communities and location of the bishop's seat; *civitates* were thus what the church ultimately decided to call dioceses, a word used by Gregory but without yet this specialized meaning.[63] Merovingian sources use a variety of terms for the city in this dual sense with slightly different semantic emphases but all capable of being synonyms: *civitas, urbs, municipium,* and, especially, *pagus*. The last term could also be used not only for the city broadly understood, but also for the territory over which it ruled, for a subdivision of the territory, and for higher level regions than the *civitates* (duchies, to speak a little anachronistically) – the context in the sources is almost always clear.[64] Despite overlapping secular and ecclesiastical terms, Gregory's narrative preference was for the secular *civitas* and its synonyms.

There were about a hundred and twenty *civitates* in Merovingian Gaul, the vast majority going back to Roman cities, a few to second-rank settlements

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61 For reasons of space I have passed over two questions that have an important profile in the literature. 1) The tiresome argument as to the Roman or Germanic origin of the household offices; on the current vogue for 'synthesis,' see above n. 3. The argument for Germanic continuity has to be based on post-Merovingian offices and seems too little, too late; the practices and nomenclature in roughly contemporary states are more important. And, connected to the same question, 2) the claim that palace administration was the extension of the domestic household arrangements of the primitive (Germanic) 'houselord.' For refutation, see Karl Kroeschell, *Haus und Herrschaft im frühen deutschen Recht: Ein methodischer Versuch* (Gottingen, 1968).

62 See Map 1 with Gallic *civitates* of the *Notitia Galliarum* arranged according to their episcopal configurations.

63 Gregory uses it to refer to the circumscription of a bishop ('diocese') *or* its ecclesiastical subdivisions ('parishes') as, apparently, the spirit moves him. *Parrochia* just happens to be a synonym meaning parish in Gregory, but it is clear from other sources that it too had not yet generally acquired this specialization. Cf. *pagus,* above n. 38.

64 Murray (as in n. 88), 802.

called *castra* whose relative fortunes (economic or political) had improved. Gregory mentions by name ninety-three of them.[65] Most possessed impressive Roman-era fortifications, erected at great expense, particularly, it seems, following the troubles of the 3rd century but also for a good time after that. These walls, surely a not insignificant reason for the survival of the *civitas*, were kept up; a few that survived the 19th century can still be seen.[66] They were obviously of importance during the hostile deployments of the kings.[67]

In the empire the *civitates* had been organized into provinces, the leading *civitas* of a province being called the *metropolis*, a Greek word originally, meaning 'mother' city. The Frankish kings made no use of the province as a unit of administration, with the exception of Provence, the province par excellence, acquired from the Goths in 536/7, and governed by an appointed *rector*, governor, or *patricius*. In place of the province, the Merovingians grouped *civitates* together when necessary under the command or office (*ducatus*) of a duke

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65   Weidemann, *Kuturgeschichte* 2: 44. Simon T. Loseby, "Lost Cities: The End of the *civitas*-system in Frankish Gaul," in *Gallien in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Kulturgeschichte einer Region*, (eds.) Steffen Diefenbach and Gernot Michael Müller, Millennium-Studien/Millennium Studies 43 (Berlin, 2013), 223–254, provides a sober and perceptive sketch of the evolution of the Gallic *civitas* from the time of Augustus; he ends with a bold effort to deal with the post-Gregorian 7th century. And see idem, "Decline and Change in the Cities of Late Antique Gaul," in *Die Stadt in der Spätantike – Niedergang oder Wandel? Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums in München am 30. und 31. Mai 2003,* (eds.) Jens-Uwe Krause and Christian Witschel, Historia Einzelschriften 190 (Stuttgart, 2006). Unlike his titles, Loseby's texts in detail are anything but gloomy.

66   Stephen Johnson, *Late Roman Fortifications* (Totowa, 1983), esp. 32–50, 82–117; Harald von Petrikovits, "Fortifications in the North-Western Roman Empire from the Third to the Fifth Centuries A.D.," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 178–218; R.M. Butler, "Later Roman Town Walls in Gaul," *Archaeological Journal* 116 (1959), 25–50. The origins of the Gallic walls are the subject of renewed interest. See Hendrik Dey, "Art, Ceremony, and City Walls: The Aesthetics of Imperial Resurgence in the Late Roman West," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 3/1 (2010), 3–37; and Bernard S. Bachrach, "The Fortification of Gaul and the Economy of the Third and Fourth Centuries," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 3/1 (2010), 38–64 and Loseby, as in previous note – all with literature.

67   I.a. see *Hist*. 4.30 (attack on Arles); 4.50 (Chilperic retreats to Tournai to await Sigibert's onslaught); 6.41 (Chilperic retires to Cambrai to await attacks from Childebert and Guntram; orders his counts and dukes to repair the walls of their of city fortifications and to take refuge in them). Bernard Bachrach draws out the tactical and strategic implications of the ubiquitous presence of fortifications in Merovingian warfare in "The Imperial Roots of Merovingian Military Organization," in *Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society in a European Perspective, AD 1–1300*, (eds.) A.N. Jørgenson and B.L. Clausen (Copenhagen, 1997), 25–31.

(*dux*). Still largely an ad hoc grouping in Gregory's time, a few, like Champagne (*ducatus Campaniae*) centred on Rheims, were beginning to enter the language as permanent identifiable regions. If the province disappeared as an element of secular administration, it still lived on, with a few regional adjustments (Map 1), as a unit of ecclesiastical organization and authority, the metropolitan bishop of the chief city providing guidance to the suffragan bishops of the other *civitates* that made up his province. A point of minor political aggravation for kings, and others, was that the ecclesiastical province did not necessarily coincide with the constituent kingdom as *civitates* were shuffled about at times of royal succession; suffragan bishops might reside under a king different from that of their metropolitan. The status and authority of metropolitans could suffer in these conditions.

The *civitates* were, to speak only slightly loosely, the currency of Merovingian politics. The various *regna* of the Merovingian kings were made of *civitates*. While over time important traditions of loyalty could be built up among these communities, not a few reveal mixed allegiances that might divide the citizenry when hostilities arose. Kings maintained agents in the *civitates* of their rivals.[68] The reliability of the *civitas'* leadership, secular and ecclesiastical, was central to royal stability when faced with the designs of competing Merovingian kinsmen, and so kings attempted to secure the allegiance of the *civitas* by binding the inhabitants with oaths of loyalty.[69] Divisions of the kingdom were made largely according to the *civitates*, and records of the revenues they produced were retained by the kingdoms, and their strategic importance well understood. *Civitates* were included among the endowments of queen consorts, and even queen daughters (though in the latter case without sign of a separate administration). The revenues, which were largely fixed,[70] could be divided if necessary and redirected through grants and exemptions (a potential revenue stream early tapped by the church);[71] occasionally districts could be hived off to meet on-the-ground strategic and communication needs. The terms of the Treaty of Andelot of 587 (*Hist.* 9.20) illustrate most of the last few points.

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68 In the times of Chlothar I, the abbot Domnolus in Paris hid spies sent by the king to gather intelligence on Childebert I (*Hist.* 6.9).

69 On such oaths, see Stefan Esders, below 12.3.3 g.

70 Hence outrage at Chilperic's new assessments tied to a tax increase (*Hist.* 5.28), and Maroveus of Poitiers' request that Childebert revise the assessment of his city to relieve those now poor or widowed (*Hist.* 9.30).

71 Is this the meaning of Chilperic's famous complaint, as recounted in Chilperic's obituary (*Hist.* 6.46)? See Alexander Callander Murray, "Merovingian Immunity Revisited," *History Compass* 8/8 (2010), 921 n. 33. On exemptions, see below, at n. 103.

There were other concentrated settlements within the *civitas* area: *castra,*
vici, and *villae.* Translations here are not necessarily enlightening, without long
discussion, as there is no universal agreement as to what even common English
terms mean. The first was a fortified settlement, the second referred to either
towns, small towns, or villages, with dependent territory. The villa (to anglicise
without translating), and its occasional synonyms, including *domus* (lit. 'house'
but in the sense of an economic enterprise of some kind) may have looked like
moderate-size settlements, villages in appearance, but the term, which surely
had a fiscal significance, also embraced settlements supporting different
modes of ownership including those that we would consider estates.[72] *Castra*
could be substantial places indeed, as suggested by the transformation of some
late Roman *castra* into bishoprics/*civitates* and also by Gregory's famous
description of Dijon (*Hist.* 3.19). His picture of the town, the residence of his
renowned great grandfather, Gregory, Bishop of Langres, is not disinterested.
Nevertheless, he thought it deserved to be a *civitas* and the site of a bishopric.
Situated in a fertile plain and amid hills producing good wine, Dijon was,
Gregory tells us, surrounded by water, which turned water mills, and defended
by the stoutest walls; these were interrupted by four gateways and protected
with thirty-three towers. Its curtain wall, fifteen feet thick and made of squared
stone in most of its lower courses and of smaller stones in the upper, reached
the height of thirty feet. It became a bishopric in 1731.

The officials and their assistants who governed the *civitates* for the king are
well known from 6th-century sources. The top rank was *dux* (duke), followed
by *comes* (count), royal appointees who received commissions and who were
classed among the kingdom's elite as *viri illustres*, a late Roman honorific for
the top nobility and state officials;[73] then *tribunus,* who may also have been

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72   Murray, *Kinship Structure*, 74–78. That villas were fiscal units, or to put it in another
      slightly more comprehensible way, units of state obligations for which the inhabitants
      were jointly responsible, no matter the modalities of ownership operating within it,
      seems lost sight of in recent searches for 'villages' or 'estates'; see e.g. *LB* 38.4, 5, regarding
      the provisioning of official travellers. The modern expectation that the term *villa* should
      embrace a single type of ownership is an unrealistic premise. Cf. the peregrinations of
      Wickham on the subject (*Framing the Early Middle Ages*, esp. 510–513), whose imaginative
      clarifications sometimes add their own layer of misunderstanding to the subject.

73   *FMarc.* 1.8 is the example of such a commission. The formula could be filled in as required
      for count, duke or patrician (on the last see below) and pertains to a regional command.
      The emphasis on judicial and police powers is notable, as is its recognition of diverse
      ethnic groups ("Franks, Romans, Burgundians or others"), and the special injunction to
      look out for widows and orphans. Gregory never uses the title 'illustrious' in the *Histories*,
      though it is widespread in other sources. His term *viri magnifici* may be intended as a

commissioned; and finally *centenarius.* There has been many a dispute as to the origin of the individual offices. It is safe to say that their Roman origins are now widely, if not universally, accepted.[74] Debates about individual offices however fail to recognize that not just this or that office was derived from late Roman terminology but that the system as a whole is derived from the late Roman army, though considerably simplified.[75] *Dux* was the generic name of imperial generals and borne as a particular title by regional commanders. *Comes*, though, in its highest order, a distinction that could be applied to important generals, came to be associated with the subordinates of the general, and especially commanders based in cities, *comites civitatum. Tribunus* was a standard name for unit commanders. Vegetius gives a thumbnail sketch of the hierarchy when he recommends that the general (*dux*) know by name, if possible, every *comes* and *tribunus* under his command.[76] As for sub-officers, the common names for them were based on a new system of ranks developed from the 3rd century on. Its centrepiece, which probably became the generic term, was *centenarius*, a title that largely, though not completely, displaced the old term of centurion, which was still retained by regiments that went back to the Principate and which still makes the occasional appearance in early medieval sources.

How are we to interpret the modelling of Frankish regional ranks on the Roman military?[77] Three points readily suggest themselves. (1) The Franks at some point organized their forces roughly along the lines of the predominant military of the day, the Roman provincial army, whom they often served directly as individuals (sometimes at the highest level), for whom as groups they acted as contractors or allies, and whose position they took over in the late 5th century. (2) In the process of occupying the Gallic *civitates*, and integrating their

synonym. For *illustres* in an imperial context, see A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602* (Oxford, 1973), 528–530.

74   On the literature for the Franks, see Murray nn. 4, 19, 88, 91. Gideon Maier, *Amtsträger und Herrscher in der Romania Gothica. Vergleichende Untersuchungen zu den Institutionen der ostgermanischen Völkerwanderungsreich* (Stuttgart, 2005), is a counter-attack against the current trend, though only incidentally dealing with the Franks; see my review in *Speculum* 83/1 (2008), 215–216.

75   A more detailed version of the argument is given in Murray (as in n. 91), 65–74.

76   *Epitoma rei militaris* 3.10, (ed.) C. Lang (1885; rpr. Stuttgart, 1967); he also adds, "and *domesticus*"; the Merovingian *domesticus*, a palace and fiscal official, is not his counterpart. *Domestici* in the Roman army were imperial staff officers.

77   *Comites* were also found in the palace administration, though their position with respect to regional counts is not clear. I would think there might be *duces* attached to the palace and *tribuni*, as well, commanding units of the king's retainers (*antrustiones*).

citizens into the new regime, both civil and military, Frankish forces and their commanders were territorialized, in a way that was not foreign to the last stages of the western Empire or its Byzantine counterpart in the east. (3) Its commanders, in being dispersed, and ultimately just appointed, to the various *civitates*, took on both civil and military functions, again a feature with imperial and Byzantine parallels but thoroughly carried out in the Merovingian system. This last point brings us to the actual role of regional officials within the *civitates*.

Merovingian dukes like their Roman counterpart were generals, and, like their Roman counterparts who bore the title in a narrow sense, they were regional commanders. It is not possible to connect all the *duces*, named and unnamed, in Gregory's pages with specific regions, and it seems likely that some resided in the palace around the king, or elsewhere, awaiting assignment as regional commanders or as leaders of, or participants in, campaigns and expeditions, or to be called upon for their expertise.[78] The *ducatus* (the term refers to the office or command of a *dux*, not a particular territory, that is, duchy as will later be the case) was clearly at some level the pinnacle of service – in one place (*Hist*. 9.12) Gregory characterizes it, in a flowery phrase, as the preeminence of ducal command (*primatus ducatus*). Guntram Boso, already a *dux*, though an imperiled one, could fantasize that one day he would hold the "ducal command of the whole kingdom" (*ducatus totius regni*) once Merovech, Chilperic's son, became king (*Hist*. 5.4). The potential power of the title was not limited to specific regional offices.

Those clearly holding regional office are prominent in the *Histories* but the exact number of regional commands existing in Gaul at one time during Gregory's episcopate is hard to pin down: about a dozen is a reasonable enough estimate. Regional dukes exercised authority over a number of *civitate*s, and thus the counts ruling over them. The grouping of *civitates* under dukes could be flexible in number and configuration. Some like the Auvergne and Champagne regions seem more or less fixed at least as regards their core. Tours and Poitiers were assigned to a series of dukes: Gundovald from the late 560s to 573 under Sigibert; under Chilperic, Dracolen ca 576–578, and Berulf from 578 to 584. Berulf's *ducatus* in 583 included, at least temporarily, Angers and Nantes. Childebert tried to impose Gararic in 584/85 in a command that was probably supposed to include Limoges. From 585 to 588, under Childebert, Ennodius commanded Tours and Poitiers. Agynus was probably duke in 588.

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78   Cf. Gundulf (*Hist*. 6.11); and the 21 *duces* on the Lombard campaign (*Hist*. 10.3) – where did they all come from?

Though the *dux* was the military commander of the region to which he was assigned, he also exercised civil jurisdiction – essentially the same as that of his subordinate the count, namely policing and security, which are not only well attested in Gregory's pages regarding political matters but was surely central to the office even in mundane affairs; on the appointment of Nicetius as duke over Auvergne (including Rodez and Uzès), Gregory commented on how well he kept the peace (*Hist.* 8.18). A judicial function in criminal matters follows from his police functions, but though his office was no simple appeal court from that of the count, he probably exercised a far wider jurisdiction if he chose to make his court available to litigants.

The region of Provence was brought into the Merovingian kingdom only in 536/7, and constitutes a distinctive administrative arrangement (even if only slightly so) for high-level regional commands; its ruler was very much a *dux*, even if the terminology was more varied. Under the Ostrogothic regime the governor was the *rector* or *prefectus*, with the honorary title *patricius,* a term not without military associations, as it had been granted by the emperors to the Master of the Soldiers and indeed, according to Gregory, to Clovis himself.[79] After the division of Provence in 561 between Austrasia and Burgundy two parallel sets of terminology are applied to the region by Gregory. Austrasian regional administrators holding the enclave of Marseilles generally bore the titles of *rectores/prefecti*: Jovinus; Albinus; Dynamius; and Nicetius, whom at one point Gregory calls *patricius*. Burgundian governors, controlling a much larger area, based on Arles, fairly consistently in Gregory's account, bear the title *patricius*: Agricola, going back at least to the unified kingdom of Chlothar I; Celsus; Amatus; Mummolus, also called *dux* by Gregory after his defection. After Mummolus, *dux* became Gregory's term for Burgundian holders of the office: Calomniosus and Leudeghysel. The division of Provence and, after the death of Sigibert, the city of Marseilles, accounts for much of the complicated politics of the region in Gregory's narrative, often involving the bishop of Marseilles, Theodore.

Attempts to classify *duces* according to their ethnicity as (Gallo-) Romans or 'Germanen' – the criteria are mainly their names but also rather narrow assumptions about descent – are tempting but defy any statistical summary.[80] That the *ducatus* were held by both ethnic Gallo-Romans and Franks is hardly to be doubted. But by the mid 6th century, names did not necessarily follow defined ethnic tracks and intermarriage among the Gallic, Burgundian, and

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79   *Hist.* 2.38. Gregory well understood the different significance of late imperial titles, as he found them in his sources, and as they were used in contemporary practice.

80   The caution here serves for *all* officials.

Frankish aristocracy multiplied ethnic descent lines, thus confounding the modern reliance on simple ethnic indicators. Gundulf, the Austrasian duke with the thoroughly Germanic name, who, Gregory discovered, was his kinsman, and identifies as a descendant of the Roman senatorial class – at least in one line which would be sufficient for the point – should serve as a caution; however, his modern classification among the 'Romanen' seems precipitate, without us hearing on the subject from Gundulf himself.[81] In the following century, the occasional classifications of high office holders by Fredegar as Franks, Burgundians, or Romans 'by birth' is based on cultural premises rather different than those applied by moderns to officials in the *Histories*.[82]

A *civitas* might be grouped with others into a *ducatus* under a *dux*, but its immediate ruler, as a delegate of the king, was the *comes*, count: the term is commonly used in Gregory and elsewhere in association with the city over which he exercised jurisdiction. The count was responsible for royal administration in the *civitas*.[83] His associate in this enterprise was the bishop (who in one way or another was also a royal appointee). Relations were not always harmonious. Their respective roles might seem, on some theoretical plane, to be parallel, but in fact they constantly intersected. Both were implicated in the administration of justice and the collection of revenue. Both held courts (the count was generally accompanied on the tribunal by important citizens of the *civitas*) and even joint hearings when both their jurisdictions claimed an interest over the status of persons.[84] Even strictly afflictive criminal proceedings held by the count were subject to moralizing ecclesiastical intervention, though not necessarily of the official variety (a theme the *Histories* hardly avoids and a staple of saints' Lives). Add politics, ambition, human nature, and the ornery clash of human perspectives, and relations could deteriorate. Gregory mentions his attempts to bind Count Leudast with oaths of loyalty.

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81   Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1: 30, classifies dukes as to whether their origin was Roman or Germanic, as if origin were singular. She has a small, undefined group, which includes Bobo (whose father was Mummolinus but whose brother was Bodygislus!). The undeniable ethnic identifier Gregory uses for Frankish dukes is 'Saxon,' for Chulderic, clearly an outlier.

82   On Gregory's perception of ethnicity see: Walter Goffart, "Foreigners in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Florilegium* 4 (1982) 80–99; rpt. in his *Rome's Fall and After* (London, 1989), 80–99; and Edward James, "Gregory of Tours and the Franks," in *After Rome's Fall*, 51–66.

83   For the etymological fallacy that stresses the literal meaning of the word as 'companion' [of the king], see comments in Murray, "*Pax*," 276–277; and as applied to the *tribunus*, Murray, "Reinhard Wenskus," 48–49.

84   The count presided "cum senioribus vel laicis vel clericis" in *Hist.* 5.48; and cf. 6.18.

After Leudast's fall, Gregory also managed to extract from Chilperic the right of Tours to nominate his successor. Such a privilege was still an exception in Gregory's day but the theme of local nomination would appear again early in the following century.[85]

The counts of Tours during Gregory's episcopate were the following. Leudast took office under Charibert (†567) and on his death gave his allegiance to Chilperic. In office for a short time in 573, the year Gregory became bishop, he came back again under Chilperic from 577 to 579. Eunomius followed from 579 to 584. In the brief period Guntram held the city in 584/85, Willichar was count. Under Childebert II, the count is generally supposed to have been Gregory's friend Galienus.[86]

The count, as a delegate of royal authority involved in the collection of judicial fees (especially the *fredus*) and revenues and in the exercise of jurisdiction, is paralleled in the north of the kingdom by an official called a *grafio*.[87] This term, used in *Lex Salica* and a few other, mainly, legal sources that confirm its application to Germanic speaking regions, is essentially a northern, vernacular version of the *comes*, and is an indicator, not of a separate, ethnic-based system of administration in the Frankish north, but of the bilingual nature of the kingdom. The term is never used by Gregory and the few references we have to *grafiones* simply equate them with the *comites* of Gregory and many other Merovingian sources.[88]

The count was hardly alone in his administration of the *civitas*. This is the level in the hierarchy at which Gregory almost, but not quite, abandons us, and incidentally confirms the role of comital officials in the collection of taxes. In two instances he mentions deputy counts, an office that would be standard under the Carolingians. A former *vicarius*, Injuriosus, was involved in the murder of the Jewish money-lender Armentarius to whom he obligated himself against monies raised in taxation, as did the count his superior.[89] Another *vicarius*,

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85   Murray, "Edict of Paris," 28–29.

86   Gregory identifies Galienus as a friend in *Hist.* 5.49; Galienus' countship comes from Fortunatus, *Carm.* 10.12; and also see *VM* 4.35 and *Hist.* 9.7. Cf. Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte* 1: 78–80.

87   Gregory mentions the *fredus* in *VM* 4.26. It is a Franco-Latin term but it was not in his time peculiarly Frankish. To say "they call [the penalty due the fisc] the *fredus*" is simply Gregory's way of saying that it was the common term, and not in his usual word-hoard of late classical terms. It was collected everywhere.

88   Alexander Callander Murray, "The Position of the Grafio in the Constitutional History of Merovingian Gaul," *Speculum* 61/4 (1986), 787–805.

89   The count was Eunomius, involved in the loans, though not prosecuted. The date of these events is 584 when Eunomius and apparently Injuriosus had lost their offices, and

Animodus, appears, in Gregory's telling of it, to have been in collusion with Chuppa, Chilperic's former master of the stables, in frustrating mechanisms for hunting down cattle thieves in 590.

Tribuni are mentioned three times by Gregory. One is an historical reference (*GM* 40) to a tribune called Nunninus, from Clermont, on a return trip from Austrasia (*Francia*) where he had delivered taxes (*tributa*) to Queen Theudechild, probably daughter of Theuderic I. The second, contemporary reference confirms the tribunician role in taxation: a certain tribune Medardus, is alleged by Gregory to have been mixed up in the killing of Armentarius over the loans made against income from taxation (filling out the upper reaches of the comital hierarchy in this affair as involving the *comes,* his *vicarius,* and a *tribunus*). The final reference mentions a tribune as one of the victims of the sons of Waddo in Poitiers. Other sources show *tribuni* doing what we would expect: the *Vita Corbiniani* mentions a *tribunus*, and subordinate *centenarii*, tasked with the execution of a brigand.[90]

The *centenarius*, the well attested subordinate of the count in 6th-century (and indeed subsequent) sources is not mentioned by Gregory at all. His command was called a *centena*, or hundred, which he exercised in sub-districts of the *pagus*. The position was hardly lofty but it was central to the administration of justice and the peace-keeping role of counts in the *pagus*. The *centenarius* may have been responsible, one assumes, for district units in the comital levy of the *civitas*. In 6th-century judicial documents, however, he appears as a minor judge and, even more prominently, as the commander of police associations of landholders responsible for hunting down rustlers and their prey. An elaborate network of these associations, based ultimately on late imperial practice, was regulated by the 6th-century kings, who required them under penalty to produce thieves chased into their areas. Some such structure likely lies behind Gregory's account of the ill-fated raid of Chuppa, once *comes stabuli* of Chilperic, into the Tours area in 590. The failure to produce Chuppa, whose identity was known and whose party was closely pursued and in part killed and captured, was attributed by Gregory to the collusion of a *vicarius* Animodus, who, only after royal intervention, was tried along with Chuppa at the royal court. The existence throughout the period of frontiers between not always friendly kings provided thieves with their best, and time-worn,

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possibly their ability to recoup the profits of their tenure against which the instruments had been issued. The passage is an important, though inexact, indication of potential profits to be made in administering tax collection. On deputy positions in the late Roman military hierarchy, see Murray, as at n. 91, 71–72.

90   *Vita Corbiniani* 1.10, (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 6 (Hanover, 1913).

opportunity for avoiding capture. The kings of the time thus laid down by treaty rules for the pursuit of thieves across frontiers under *centenarii* and the responsibilities of the associations on both sides of the border. The extension of such arrangements between Austrasia and the kingdom of Chlothar II is the context for Rauching's conspiracy with the *proceres* of the latter to overthrow Childebert II in 590. His dealings with them were carried out, Gregory tells us, under the pretext of negotiating security measures along the border aimed at the reduction of quarrels and plundering raids between the two kingdoms (*Hist.* 9.9).[91]

One other important regional office should be mentioned, well attested in 7th-century sources, but only barely distinguishable in Gregory's time – a fiscal official called a *domesticus* responsible for the estates of the king in the *pagus*. There is only one brief reference to regional *domestici* in Gregory.[92] His existence in the 6th century completes, nevertheless, a triad of distinct but overlapping authorities in the *pagus* or *civitas* – the bishop over the christian community as a whole and various dependents recognized by law; the count as the overseer of the military and security affairs, as the judge ordinary over those who could claim the forum of the public courts, and as guardian of the public rights of the king; and the *domesticus* as the supervisor of the monarchy's fiscal estates and their people. The balance, and tension, between the three, one can guess, was no mere accident but designed into the system.

In Gregory's day, the names for the commands of the three main officials of regional administration – the *ducatus* of the duke, the *comitatus* of the count, and the *centena* of the *centenarius* – were not yet territorial terms: the *ducatus* was exercised over regional groupings of *civitates*; the *comitatus* over the *civitas* or *pagus*; and the *centena* over traditional subdivisions of the *pagus*. By the 8th century the terms were beginning to be applied to the territory itself – the duchy, the county, and the hundred – and as such had a long history in the regional administration of European states far beyond Gaul, where they began; indeed, they outlived the Middle Ages itself.

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91 For the organization of *centenae* and their policing associations, see Alexander Callander Murray, "From Roman to Frankish Gaul: *Centenarii* and *Centenae* in the Administration of the Merovingian Kingdom," *Traditio*: *Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought and Religion* 44 (1988), 59–100.

92 In 591 Guntram, in preparation for the baptism of Chlothar, summoned "many [officials] from his kingdom, both *domestici* and *comites*, who were to make ready the royal expenditures that would be required" (*Hist.* 10.28). These would be regional officials of the *civitas* and the *fisc* (whose properties were dispersed across the countryside, and thus the *civitates*) charged with provisioning and hosting Guntram's party as it made its way between Chalon and the Paris region where the baptism was to take place.

6.6   Kings and Subjects

The relations of kings to their subjects (and indeed their officials) were mediated through modes of communication and practices derived largely from the provincial setting of the late Empire. Despite Lot's gloomy assessment of kings and their officials, the administrative system was intended not merely to hold on to territory, collect revenues, and raise military levies. It had, as we have just seen, an important role in the maintenance of public order, the administration of justice, the harnessing of traditional state obligations, and the redistribution of public resources. In general the Merovingian state attempted to recoup its involvement in judicial affairs through the collection of fines and penalties, which the ruler and his principal regional representatives shared, and to direct part of its revenue into the hands of lay magnates and, especially, churches, the facilitation of whose mission was thought to be a pillar of the state's stability. Though the monarchy's involvement in judicial matters had an important financial side to it (the importance of which arguably increased as time went on) the motives for royal involvement were not merely fiscal. Peacekeeping and justice in royal ideology were tied, not disingenuously, to the retention of God's favour and were seen as the prerequisites of successful kingship.[93]

The basic tool for the exercise of power over the king's subjects and for communicating with regional officials was the use of written instruments.[94] These in general terms assumed an epistolographic form – a letter, at least, in external appearance – and were derived ultimately from late imperial practice,

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93   The requirement of justice could be seen in both religious and practical, almost contractual terms; compare the preambles to the Edict of Paris, where the provision of justice is tied to meriting God's favour; and the *Constitutio* (or *Praeceptio*) of Chlothar (II) where royal justice and the devotion of subjects are linked in a reciprocal relationship; and cf. *Hist.* 7.8. Religious perspectives are stressed by the *Childeberti I regis praeceptum* and in Guntram's speech to commanders of riotous, insubordinate forces (*Hist.* 8.30). Capitularia nos 2, 5, 8, 9; the two latter are trans. in Murray, *Reader*, no. 72–73 (for the corrected translation of 72, c. 2, see Murray, "New MGH Edition of the Charters," 258, n. 37); for 5, see Jocelyn Hillgarth, *The Conversion of Western Europe 350–750* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969), 102–103; rev. 1986. No. 8 should be consulted in the edition of Stefan Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition und merowingisches Königtum: Zum Rechtscharakter politischer Herrschaft in Burgund im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 134 (Göttingen, 1997).

94   On literacy in general – traditionally underestimated, sometimes grossly – see Ian Wood, "Administration, Law and Culture in Merovingian Gaul, in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, (ed.) Rosamund McKitterick (Cambridge 1990), 63–81.

especially the rescript.[95] They bore a number of names (*auctoritates, praecepta, praeceptiones, constitutiones*) and generally took the form of a directive, a command issued to the addressee, usually one or more regional officials or bishops. Directives served many purposes: issuing edicts (legislation) of general or specific application; appointing officials (commissions) and ordering the ordination of bishops; issuing commands of all kinds of an administrative or judicial nature; granting gifts and privileges; and responding to the petitions of subjects. The single record we have of many of them was probably one item in a bundle of communications sent out to interested recipients.[96] The earliest record we have of a Frankish king in action is a directive that Clovis sent to the bishops of Aquitaine during the Vouillé campaign informing them of his planned treatment of the church and its people and outlining the need for the response of the bishops to be honest when they petitioned for the release of prisoners improperly taken by his forces. The process appears largely to have worked through the interchange of properly sealed and validated letters, and it is clear that Clovis was hardly overseeing the correspondence personally.[97] Petitions of various kinds continued to be sent from the *civitates*, the best attested being a *consensus*, a petition by the community to the king to accept their choice of a nominee to the episcopacy.[98] Personal visits to court were of course used to solicit directives confirming or granting privileges or rights.

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95   The classic work, brilliant but flawed, is Peter Classen, "Kaiserrescript und Königsurkunde: Diplomatische Studien zum römisch-germanischen Kontinuitätsproblem," in *Archiv für Diplomatik 1* (1955), 1–87; 2 (1956), 1–115; it was reprinted unchanged, but under the new title *Kaiserrescript und Königsurkunde: Diplomatische Studien zum Problem der Kontinuität zwischen Altertum und Mittelalter* (Thessalonika, 1977). For further comments, see Murray, "New MGH Edition of the Charters," esp. at n. 15; and Classen's own summation, "Fortleben und Wandel spätrömischen Urkundenwesens im frühen Mittelalter," in *Recht und Schrift im Mittelalter*, (ed.) Peter Classen, Vorträge und Forschungen 23 (Sigmaringen, 1977), 13–54.

96   See a 7th-century charter (privilege) example, often thought to be issued uniquely but whose surviving form points to multiple copies, in Murray, "New MGH Edition of the Charters," 260–261.

97   *Capitularia*, no. 1; trans. in Murray, *Reader* no. 42.

98   The word in Gregory and elsewhere has of course more conventional meanings. Its technical meaning as a document is shown (several times) in *Hist.* 4.26 (note Gregory uses the word *consilium* in the same passage for 'consent' or 'permission'). Other examples: *Hist.* 6.15, 8.22, 9.23, 10.1 (re Rome, but surely accurate in its fashion). An actual Frankish specimen exists in *FMarc* 1.7. Rio's speculation (*Formularies*, 139) that the document's placement in the formulary suggests that the *consensus* was actually a *post hoc* affirmation of a royal decision is incorrect. Gregory shows clearly that it was an attempt to influence the royal decision before it was made.

Such directives were not necessarily sufficient in themselves to establish a right. They were meant to be examined at the local level by the count to determine that their claims corresponded to law – an old principle of Roman law. Gregory's story of Andarchius typically enough shows the system ultimately failing, but the principles stand out in it just the same – Andarchius' first petition, solicited fraudulently from the court, was turned back by the count after examination, but the second, after more subterfuge by Andarchius, succeeded until divine justice intervened (*Hist.* 4.45).

The use of written instruments of course also extended to the private affairs of the king's subjects and the administrative actions of regional officials. For example the various steps in judicial processes, whether before counts or ecclesiastical tribunals, appear accompanied by documentation in the formulae collections. Even in the case of *Lex Salica*, whose procedures appear to be overwhelmingly oral and performative, the king's official still issued a discharge notice or receipt (called a *securitas*) recording the payment of fees owed to the king (*LS* 54.4). And as a final testament to the pedestrian use of writing, it is worth noting the survival in the cities, of central Gaul at least, of public archives, where the transactions of citizens could be recorded and registered. The panels that controlled access to these archives are the best evidence we have, even if it is slight, of the survival of the Roman municipal institution of the *curia* across the 5th and 6th centuries.[99]

The system of obligations by which kings drew on the financial and physical resources of their subjects can be summarized briefly in outline but discussed seriously only at considerable length. To simplify, we can distinguish two main categories of obligation, though they might overlap: those concerned with taxation, consisting mainly of financial payments, and those comprising liturgies, namely the duty to perform services of various kinds on behalf of the state.

No one doubts, even if only on the basis of reading Gregory of Tours, that Roman taxation survived through the 6th century and was a major source of royal income. The main problem is the extent of this survival and the eventual fate of its component parts, namely whether they were retained for the most part by the king or redirected into the hands of the *Franci* during the establishment of the kingdom and thereafter into the hands of the churches, in both cases not without receiving services in return – military on one hand and on the other, spiritual, social, and administrative. The traditional view (without particular details), and which I would still tend to support in its main outline, sees royal control of direct taxation gradually decreasing over the Merovingian

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99   Some of the issues are touched on by Murray, "New MGH Edition," 253–257.

period.[100] (An analogous problem is the monarchy's fiscal properties which often passed into the hands of officials and churches – but also passed back again in a fashion that is not really understood.)

Systems of obligations generally make provision for exemptions for those who claim they deserve relief because of their performance of other services beneficial to the public good – a claim often, then and now, conflated with privilege and influence. Financial exemption from taxation (*tributum*) in Roman and Merovingian public law was called immunity (*immunitas*, or to use the Merovingian Latin form *emunitas*), a phenomenon Gregory clearly alludes to though he never uses the technical term.[101] For the Frankish kingdom, the earliest reference to it – involving clerics – comes from Clovis' reign.[102] The development of a distinctively Frankish immunity involving the collection of judicial fees and fines (another great source of royal revenue) was probably being developed in Gregory's days but the charter evidence for this privilege in its developed stage comes only from well into the next century.[103]

There were two main liturgical obligations on the inhabitants of the *civitates*, each not dissimilar to the other, and probably linked through the same officials overseeing both: peace-keeping duties and military service.[104] Regarding policing, landholders were grouped into associations which in the course of the 6th century were placed under the command of *centenarii*, as has already been mentioned. They were put under oath and expected to man watches and to come when summoned to join posses (*trustes*, then, when under *centenarii*,

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100   The great revisionist study is Jean Durliat, *Les finances publiques de Diocletian aux Carolingiens (284–889)*, Beihefte der Francia 21 (Sigmaringen, 1990). This book deserves criticism but not neglect. It raises important questions about the terminology of the sources and our conceptualization of the countryside; cf. my review in *Speculum* 67/4 (1992), 959–962.

101   See, e.g. *Hist.* 3.25: tax exemption granted to the churches of Auvergne by Theudebert (probably an effort to compensate for his father's harrying of the region); and Gregory's historical argument for the exemption of Tours since the time of Chlothar (9.30). An *auctoritas*, that is an exemption or immunity charter, was elicited, apparently, only at the time of the dispute in 591.

102   *Concilium Aurelianense* 5, a. 511, MGH Concilia 1 (Hanover, 1883), (ed.) Friedrich Maasen. On the imperial background, Murray, "Edict of Paris," 18–20.

103   Murray, "Edict of Paris" and now, "Merovingian Immunity Revisited."

104   A detailed discussion of the Frankish military is still not possible at this stage. The following discussion sticks to the obligations of the *civitates*. The composition of Frankish armies is a separate subject that deserves a dedicated discussion involving i.a. the meaning of *Franci, leudes, fideles*, and *antrustiones*. The last word is not used by Gregory; but on the meaning of the primary element, see Murray, "From Roman to Frankish Gaul," 86–88; and also *LS* MGH "Wortregister" s.v., and *FMarc.* 1.18.

centenae) in pursuit of thieves, mainly rustlers. To encourage their enthusiasm, they were held financially responsible for thefts in their area, fined if they failed to join a posse, and in certain circumstances allowed to share in the penalties imposed on captured thieves. Almost all the elements of the Frankish system are anticipated in often longstanding practices in the Roman provinces.[105]

The same cannot be said for the obligation to perform military service, at least in a formal sense.[106] The late Roman Gallic population and its aristocracy were anything but unwarlike, but landlords were responsible for producing recruits for an army that had been professionalized, not for serving in it themselves, though they were perfectly capable of outfitting themselves and their followers with horses and weapons. And though the *civitates* in the 5th century often proved capable of defending themselves in difficult times, the late Roman state never resorted to general levies of the population, though there were undoubtedly military-like obligations to man and repair the walls of the cities.[107] But in Gregory's Gaul, it seems, military service was a general obligation on the free population and performed not just by those identified as ethnic Franks, who enjoyed exemptions as compensation, but by the citizens of the *civitates*. Gregory in fact is a prime source for the participation of citizen levies in 6th-century Gallic wars.[108] The nature of the obligation, and especially its relation to property holding, is never described and so poorly understood, though in passing Gregory does suggest that the citizens of the *civitas,* in normal times performing security functions, were liable to two week stints, in some kind of rotation.[109]

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105   Murray, "From Roman to Frankish Gaul," 77–80.

106   A key to understanding the Merovingian system of military obligation may lie in clarifying the Carolingian one. For a first salvo on this approach, see Walter Goffart. "Frankish Military Duty and the Fate of Roman Taxation," *Early Medieval Europe* 16 (2008), 166–190, with literature.

107   Bachrach, (as at n. 67), 26 sees this as contributing to the militarization of society. The Novel of Valentinian III for Rome (*CT* NVal. 5.2, a. 440) cited there presupposes that magistrates already possessed the powers to compel such service. The only evidence for the continuation of obligations of the menial (not military or peace-keeping) kind, comes it seems from the next century: *Vita Balthildis* 6, (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 2 (Hanover, 1888).

108   *LS* 63 triples the wergild (*leodis*) of those in the army for the duration of their service. While the A redaction appears to envisage only Franks, the C redaction seems to extend the rule to those serving generally.

109   *Hist.* 7.21: "impletisque quindecim diebus"; with forces from Orleans and Blois alternating their postings in two week intervals.

As a public service expected from the inhabitants of the *civitas*, it was inevitably subject to claims of exemption. Gregory asserts that the poor dependents of the cathedral and Saint Martin's basilica were exempted from military service, even though Chilperic's officials tried to fine them for failure to come out on an expedition against the Bretons in 577.[110] Seven years later, in 585, an establishment (*domus*) of Saint Martin's, located in Bourges, faced a similar fine after the campaign against Gundovald, when the agents of the count of Bourges insisted on penalties for the *homines* of Saint Martin and were, according to Gregory, rebuffed by a miracle.[111] The exemption claimed in both cases was apparently customary, and may have reflected a widespread understanding that the really poor should not be subject to the levy, undoubtedly an ecclesiastical point of view; there is no hint that a written exemption underlay the claims of the bishop of Tours. And Gregory is never really clear whether the claims of exemption were in the end successful in sparing Saint Martin's from penalties.

6.7   Conclusion

How to summarize such a vast subject after a breathless and selective digest of it! I hope readers will understand if in conclusion I mainly address what I take to be common prejudices about the world in which Gregory lived. If these are countered, then Gregory and the sources available to elucidate his society open themselves to further investigation. Christian Pfister in a summary which once served as an introduction to Merovingian institutions some time ago caught the imperative of the default position, even if his interpretations in detail hardly confirmed it: "The Merovingian period as a whole is without doubt a melancholy period. It marks in history what must be called an eclipse of civilization, and it deserves to be described as a barbaric era."[112] The human condition may be melancholy, but I find it hard to understand why the Merovingian period stands out in particular relief in that picture. As for Merovingian governance, and the institutions that supported it, they do not reflect a primitive order to be traced either to a barbarian world beyond the

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110   *Hist.* 5.26: the exempted category is characterized as *pauperes et iuniores*, the latter term referring either to age or position.

111   *Hist.* 7.42. The story suggests that in the *comitatus* of Tours the right was acknowledged. Officials in Bourges were apparently more sceptical.

112   "Gaul under the Merovingian Franks: Institutions," *Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1913), 2: 155. And cf. Ampère, cited above, ch. 3, n. 14.

frontiers (or even further) or to the recurrence of archaic forms brought on by a chaotic post-Roman order reduced to personal relations, ritual, and incompetence. Lot's emphasis on the personal and the mindless greedy self-interest of the period, noted at the beginning of this chapter, was simply another variation on the apparently timeless evaluation of Pfister and countless scholars before him and was his way of countering the prevailing argument for Germanic institutions.[113] Purveyors of updated, modern versions of this view seem not to acknowledge that all systems can be analyzed in terms of status and personal ties and self interest, not least of all modern ones – and who is so bold as to give anywhere a passing grade? In the Merovingian case, the form these hard views take is based on assumptions about an age, not the testimony of its sources. Moreover the harsh moralizing of Gregory of Tours on the faults of his contemporaries lends itself to being filtered through the haughty superiority that modern times reserves for its putative rough beginnings following the collapse of Roman power in the western provinces. In the same vein, there is a new methodological cliché in recent attempts to deal with Merovingian administration that takes a negative approach, pretending to be hard-nosed scholarship, saying 'we don't know this' and 'we don't know that,' implying meanwhile that all therefore was chaotic, or the crazy modern horror of horrors, apparently, not 'uniform,' and showing in the process uninterest – necessary for the thesis – in what we do know.[114] It must be admitted there is much we do not fully grasp about the Merovingian system, but just because we do not understand the intricacies of bureaucratic advancement for instance, or how the close advisors of the king exercised their offices, does not mean the system was chaos, without order or specialization.[115] Gregory's narrative and the legal sources hardly bear this interpretation out, just as the legislation (barely touched on here) on security in the countryside contradicts Lot's derisive comment that the only service the kings provided was pillaging expeditions for their followers.

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113   Long an early stop on the subject for English readers, O.M. Dalton (Introduction to his translation of the Histories [Oxford 1927]) is a relentless exponent of a similar version, citing on and off Pfister.

114   Where the negative approach is applicable is in the trans-Rhenan regions where we cannot be sure systematic Gallic (and Roman-based) patterns were reproduced. This is a different subject that has to be approached in conjunction with the evidence of the Carolingian period. The method owes its genesis to the efforts of German post-war scholarship to maintain a much more limited *Kontinuitätsfrage*. Its subsequent adoption in the Anglophone world as a general model for Gaul seems historiographically naïve.

115   In modern times, of course, in actual fact few if any, of the top political jobs in government require a specialist.

The above pages provide reason to think that Merovingian governance fitted readily within a late antique context, deriving its forms from its immediate late Roman past, which on a provincial level long fostered mixed arrangements especially on the frontiers, and from the contemporary structures of a Mediterranean commonwealth that shared the same history. The modern conceit that it must have been weaker and less organized than its predecessor (and successor) is best left for the moment *in aeternum*. There is much we do not know about how the Merovingian kingdom functioned. But there is much we do know, and there is still much to learn.

The Church in Sixth-Century Gaul

Yitzhak Hen

7.1   Introduction

The study of the Church and its role in 6th-century Gaul, like the study of any religious aspect of late antique and early medieval history, requires a preliminary mental readjustment.[1] One must temporarily abandon familiar cultural territory and radically question received intellectual categories. Merovingian society was fundamentally different from our own, and much less recognisable in our own contemporary terms.[2] Similarly, early medieval Christianity was a very different religion from its modern descendant – much less clear-cut in its doctrines, morality or organisation than we might prefer to imagine. Although, as far as religious debates and conflicts are concerned, we are in a world broadly recognisable to us – we can see, for example, issues of belief being discussed by clergymen and their 'heretical' opponents; we

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1   On the Frankish Church, the starting point is still John M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1984). See also Luce Pietri, "L'Église du *Regnum Francorum*," in *Histoire du christianisme des origins à nos jours*: III – *Les églises de l'Orient et de l'Occident* (Paris, 1998), 745–799.

2   For some surveys of Merovingian society and history, see Ian N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London and New York, 1994); Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York and Oxford, 1998); Edward James, *The Franks* (Oxford, 1998); Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich* (Stuttgart, 1988); Martina Hartmann, *Aufbruch ins Mittelalter: Die Zeitgeist der Merowinger* (Darmstadt, 2003).

can observe religious communities, with their own hierarchy and officials, representing a focus of loyalty and commitment quite separate from the political institutions of the state; we can see a range of religious choices available and how those choices might have had an impact on an individual's sense of identity and place in the world – and yet, it appears that many of our familiar patterns of thinking about religion and religious experiences are simply ill suited to the analysis of what the Gallo-Romans or the Frankish inhabitants of Gaul perceived as the divine sphere.

Moreover, the function of religion and religious institutions cannot be the same in a society like that of 6th-century Gaul, where religion, or more precisely Christianity, was thoroughly intertwined with all areas of public and social interaction, and in one such as ours, in which communal life and culture is largely secularised. Hence, we should disabuse ourselves of the notion of a disembodied 'essence' of religion and religious institutions, for only then we can treat the Frankish Church as a subject of inquiry on its own terms.

One way to grasp the multi-layered and complex function of the Frankish Church in 6th-century Gaul is to think in terms of 'structural *differentiation*'.[3] As Merovingian society evolved, many political and social institutions developed a clearer identity, with specific rules, complex networks, and relative autonomy from other activities and institutions. Merovingian cultural patronage, for example, was marked by a steady passage of activity from the royal and aristocratic courts into the ecclesiastical orbit. It was not a mere continuation of the late-antique cultural sponsorship offered by rulers and rich members of the elite, but a new pattern of deportment that evolved thanks to a delicate system of control and balances that was formed throughout the 6th century, and which involved both secular magnates and ecclesiastics.[4] The stages and causes of all these changes are complex – sometimes impossible – to reconstruct, and very difficult to evaluate. Nevertheless, it is clear that by the end of the 6th century a range of new meanings and rules were infused into old institutions and activities, and these in turn created a new social, political and cultural entity, which is commonly called 'the Merovingian world'. The Church was part and parcel of this process, and in what follows I should like to use this particular model of

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3   In this respect, I follow the approach suggested by Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price, *The Religions of Rome*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1998), 1: 149.

4   See Yitzhak Hen, *Roman Barbarians: The Royal Court and Culture in the Early Medieval West* (Basingstoke and New York, 2007), 94–123.

change and transformation in order to delineate the nature and character of the Frankish Church.

7.2   Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Gaul

The history of the Frankish Church is a history of extraordinary transformation and experimentation; it is nothing less than the story of the origin and development of those attitudes and assumptions that still underline most forms of contemporary Christian life in the West. Throughout its existence, the Frankish Church had to define and redefine its position *vis à vis* the secular authorities; it had to revive and reshape old traditions in order to cope with an indecisive religious experience; and it had to develop fresh mechanisms to deal with phenomena it had never encountered before. Nevertheless, the Church in 6th-century Gaul was, perhaps, the most secure and stable institution in an ever changing political, social and cultural reality. This position was achieved through a long process of Christianisation and inculcation of Christian morals and ideals that had taken place in the western provinces of the Roman empire throughout Late Antiquity.[5]

Unfortunately, very few sources refer to the Christianisation of the Roman West before the 4th century, and in many cases we are ignorant of the first steps made by Christians to propagate their faith. As far as the region of Gaul is concerned, we only know that by the end of the 2nd century Christianity had managed to secure a stronghold in a small area of south-eastern Gaul, mainly in and around the cities of Vienne and Lyons, where Bishop Photinus and his companions were persecuted in 177.[6] However, from the beginning of the 4th century onwards there is plenty of evidence (written and archaeological) for the expansion of Christianity throughout the Rhône valley, most parts of the Auvergne, southern Aquitaine, and along the Seine and the Loire.[7] No less than eight

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5   The amount of literature on the rise of Christianity in Late Antiquity is enormous and cannot be listed here. For an excellent introduction see Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2012). See also Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianising the Roman Empire, A.D. 100–400* (New Haven and London, 1984); Philip Rousseau, *The Early Christian Centuries* (London and New York, 2002).

6   See *The Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne*, in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, (ed.) and trans. Herbert Musurillo (Oxford, 1972), 62–85. See also *Hist.* 1.29.

7   See Nancy Gauthier, *L'évangélisation de la pays de la Moselle: La province romaine de Première Belgique entre Antiquité et Moyen Age (IIIe–VIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 1980); *La christianisation des pays entre Loire et Rhin (IVe–VIIe siècle)*, (ed.) Pierre Riché, rev. ed. (Paris, 1993) [originally published in *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* 168 (1976)]; Aline Rousselle, *Croire et guérir: La foi en*

Church councils were convened in Gaul during the 4th century, and these councils provide the clearest and most obvious proof for the progress Christianity made in the West, and particularly in Gaul.[8] For example, representatives of forty-five episcopal sees, from Carthage in North Africa to Lincoln in Britain, and from Mérida in Spain to Syracuse in Sicily, were present at the first provincial council convened by Emperor Constantine in Arles (314), and their presence at the council reflects quite accurately the spread of Christianity into every corner of the western Roman empire.[9]

The 4th century was also marked by the activity of individuals, who embarked on a mission to promote the Christian creed. An excellent case in point is Martin of Tours (†397), who, after being discharged from the Roman army, dedicated his life to the conversion of the rural areas of Gaul, and ended up as the bishop of Tours and the patron saint of the Frankish kingdom.[10] Consequently, the conversion of late-antique Gaul is a story of individual clergymen and missionaries, who, like Martin of Tours, took upon themselves the burden of spreading the Christian message. Hilary of Poitiers (†ca 368), Honoratus of Arles (†429); Paulinus of Nola (†431); Eucherius of Lyons (†ca 449); and Caesarius of Arles (†542), to name only a few of the most prominent ecclesiastical figures of late-antique Gaul, were all devoted Christians, whose personal decision to dedicate their lives to the work of God contributed immensely to the Christianisation of the West. Moreover, from the end of the 4th century, following the example of Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* (published in 396), the activities of such individuals were recorded by Christian authors, and hence we are better informed on the missionary zeal and activity of later generations.[11]

It is precisely against this background of missionary activity that the conversion of the barbarians should be understood. When Ulfilas (†383), the so-called 'Apostle of the Goths', embarked on his mission to convert the Goths, Arianism

     Gaule dans l'Antiquité tardive (Paris, 1990); Bruno Dumézil, *Les racines chrétiennes de l'Europe: Conversion et liberté dans les royaume barbares, ve–viiie siècle* (Paris, 2005).

8   See *Conciles Gaulois du IVe siècle*, (ed.) and trans. Jean Gaudemet, Sources chrétiennes 241 (Paris, 1977).

9   *Concilium Arelatense (1 August, 314)*, in *Conciles Gaulois*, (ed.) and trans. Gaudemet, 35–63; for the list of participants, see 58–63.

10   See Sulpicius Severus, *Vita sancti Martini*, (ed.) and trans. Jacques Fontaine, Sources chrétiennes 133–135 (Paris, 1967–1969). On Martin of Tours, see Clair Stancliffe, *Saint Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1983); Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993).

11   On the emergence of hagiographical writing, see the succinct discussions in Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen, 2010), and see there for further bibliography.

was the dominant Christian faction in Constantinople.[12] Consequently, the
Goths embraced the 'homoian' doctrine that stressed the human nature of
Christ, and their crucial role in the conversion of other barbarian peoples
turned Arianism into one of the most prominent Christian doctrines among
the barbarians.[13] Most, if not all, the barbarian peoples who 'invaded' the
western provinces of the Roman empire adopted Christianity (albeit in its
Arian form) long before they crossed the border into Roman territory. The
Franks were probably the first from among the barbarians to openly adopt
Catholic Christianity. The personal conversion of the Frankish king Clovis
(†511) in either 496 or 507/8 paved the way for the conversion of the entire
Frankish population of his kingdom, and shortly afterwards, the Burgundian
King Sigismund followed suit in 516 and publically abandoned Arianism in
favour of Catholicism.[14]

   Although the triumph of Catholicism in the West did not happen univer-
sally and at the same time, it seems that by the end of the 5th century west-
ern Europe was, by and large, Catholic, and that the so-called barbarian
invaders and their settlement in the western regions of the Roman empire
had left only minor imprints on the state of Christianity.[15] By the end of the

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12   On Ulfilas and his career, see Knut Schäferdiek, "Wulfila: Vom Bischof von Gotien zum
      Gotenbischof," in idem, *Schwellenzeit: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Christentums in Spät-
      antike und Frühmittelalter*, (eds.) Winrich A. Löhr and Hanns C. Brennecke (Berlin and
      New York, 1996), 1–40 [originally published in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 90 (1979),
      253–292]; idem, "Ulfila und der sogennante gotische Arianismus," in *Arianism: Roman
      Heresy and Barbarian Creed,* (eds.) Roland Steinacher and Guido Berent (Aldershot, 2015),
      21–43. See also Hagith Sivan, "The Making of an Arian Goth: Ulfila Reconsidered," *Revue
      Bénédictine* 105 (1995), 280–292; eadem, "Ulfila's Own Conversion," *Harvard Theological
      Review* 89 (1996), 373–386.
13   See Zeev Rubin, "The Conversion of the Visigoths to Christianity," *Museum Helveticum* 38
      (1981), 34–54; Peter Heather, "The Crossing of the Danube and the Gothic Conversion,"
      Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 27 (1986), 289–318.
14   This is not the place to rehearse all the literature on the conversion of Clovis and its impli-
      cations, or to discuss whether he converted to Nicene Christianity straight from paganism
      or after flirting with 'Arianism'. For the basic facts, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*,
      41–49. See also William M. Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric? How Pbagan?," *Speculum* 69
      (1994), 619–664. On the date of Clovis' baptism, see Mark Spencer, "Dating the baptism of
      Clovis, 1886–1993," *Early medieval Europe* 3 (1994), 97–116; Danuta Shanzer, "Dating the
      baptism of Clovis: the Bishop of Vienne vs the Bishop of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 7
      (1998), 29–57. On the conversion of Sigismund and the Burgundians, see Dumézil, *Les
      racines*, 199–216.
15   On the fate of Arianism in the West, see Yitzhak Hen, *Western Arianism: Politics and
      Religious Culture in the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, in press).

5th century the Catholic Church was already well established and deeply rooted in most parts of Gaul, and, consequently, missionaries could either promote and consolidate the Christian belief in an already Christianised territory, or direct their missionary effort at territories beyond the former border of the Roman empire, such as Frisia and Saxony, where there were still many pagans to be converted.[16]

The unrivalled position of the Church at the eve of the Frankish invasion is manifested in the famous letter sent by Bishop Remigius of Rheims († ca 532) to the young Clovis, shortly after he had succeeded his father as the administrator of the Roman province of *Belgica secunda*. In a short passage towards the end of the letter, the bishop of Rheims asserts his world-view regarding the holders of actual power in Gaul:

> You must summon to your side counsellors who can enhance your reputation. Your bounty should be pure and decent and you should pay respect to the bishops and always have recourse to their advice; and if there is good agreement between you and them, your province will better endure.[17]

One can easily detect the paternal, and to some extent condescending, tone in Remigius' letter. But, behind the sweet talk and the flattering remarks, the forty-years-old bishop of Rheims, the most powerful bishop in northern Gaul, offered the fourteen-years-old newly enthroned Frankish *rex* a pact and, at the same time, presented him with an ultimatum. Remigius' message to Clovis was clear and straightforward – if you want to rule, make sure to join forces with the Church, otherwise your days as the ruler of *Belgica secunda* are few. The fact that a bishop could send such a blunt message to a secular ruler clearly indicates the strong, secure and self-assured position of that bishop as a representative of the Church. Clovis, of course, was smart enough to accept Remigius' offer, and by doing that set the tone for the close cooperation and competition (some economists would call it 'cooptition') between future generations of Merovingian churchmen and kings.

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16   See Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050* (London and New York, 2001).

17   *Epistolae Austrasicae*, no. 2, in *Il* Liber epistolarum *della cancellaria austrasica* (*sec. V–VI*), (ed.) and trans. Elena Malaspina, Biblioteca di Cultura Romanobarbarica 4 (Rome, 2001), 62–65. I cite the English translation by Alexander C. Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2000), 260.

7.3   Old Structures, New Settings

The Church, as we have already noted, emerged as a powerful organisation in
Late Antiquity, when every traditional institution around it was disintegrating.
Since it made its first steps in a Roman world, whose administration was quite
efficient and regulated, it was only to be expected that the Church would adopt
the organisational frameworks with which it was familiar. Hence, the structure
of the early Church was modelled after the Roman imperial administrative sys-
tem, and this basic structure survived in Gaul well into the Merovingian period.

The basic administrative unit of the Merovingian Church was the diocese
(*diocesa*), the ecclesiastical term for the Roman town (*civitas*) that was also the
centre of the Gallo-Roman, and subsequently Merovingian, local administration.
In some places, especially in the north and the far eastern parts of Gaul, where
Romanisation was less effective and where the barbarian invasions had caused
some disruption, a few new dioceses, which did not correspond exactly to Roman
administrative districts, were created and re-arranged.[18] These, however, were the
exception. In most cases the Roman administrative division of Gaul was sus-
tained, and the Merovingian Church inherited this form of ecclesiastical organ-
isation, which corresponded, to a larger extent, to its administrative borders.

There were about 120 dioceses in 6th-century Gaul, which were organised in
fifteen ecclesiastical provinces (corresponding to the old imperial provinces),
each headed by a metropolitan.[19] For example, the province (*metropolis*) of
Lyons included the dioceses (*civitates*) of Autun, Langres, Chalon-sur-Saône
and Mâcon, whose bishops were subordinated to the metropolitan bishop
(*metropolitanus*) of Lyons.[20] It seems that during the 5th and the early 6th cen-
tury a further hierarchy within the metropolitan sees evolved. Whereas Rheims
emerged as the unrivalled metropolis in the north of Gaul, primacy in the south
was much debated by the metropolitan bishops of Arles and Vienne.[21] In any
case, this hierarchy had no practical importance in the 6th century, and was
only a faded memory of the past. Bishops and metropolitans were constantly

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18   See, for example, the diocese of Mainz; K. Heinemeyer, *Das Erzbistum Mainz in römischer
     und fränkischer Z*eit, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen 39
     (Marburg, 1979).

19   See Edward James, *The origins of France: From Clovis to the Capetians, 500–1000* (London,
     1982), xiii–xvii. See also Louis Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 3 vols
     (Paris, 1907–1915).

20   *Topographie chrétienne des cites de la Gaule des origins au milieu du* VIII*e siècle*, IV – *Province
     ecclésiastique de Lyon (Lugdunensis prima),* (eds.) Brigitte Beaujard et al. (Paris, 1986).

21   See Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, I, 84–144. See also Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ecclesisatical
     Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, DC, 1989).

fighting over power, resources and prestige, but no clear-cut or approved hierarchy of the metropolitan sees, and of the dioceses within the provinces themselves, was ever recognised and acknowledged by all parties.

The legacy of the Gallo-Roman Church provided a solid foundation not only for the structural formation of the Merovingian Church, but also for its personnel. The establishment of the Gallo-Roman Church, which occurred during the late 3rd and early 4th century, coincided with the creation of the western provincial aristocracy.[22] Consequently, the two became inseparable, and a significant number of the Church leaders of late-antique Gaul were members of the Gallo-Roman provincial elite.[23] Some of them started their ecclesiastical career at a fairly early stage and gradually climbed the ecclesiastical ladder; however, most of them joined the service of the Church after a long career in the imperial administration, and hence regarded the post of a bishop as the culmination of their *cursus honorum*. A glaring example of such an aristocrat is Sidonius Apollinaris († ca 484), who served as a *tribunus et notarius* under Emperor Majorian (†461), a *comes* at the court of Majorian (461), and as the *praefectus urbis Romae* (468) under Emperor Anthemius (†472); he also became *patricius* at some time in his career, and in 469 he was elected to the bishopric of Clermont.[24]

It is very difficult to ascertain whether most bishops in late-antique Gaul were indeed, like Sidonius Apollinaris, members of the local senatorial elite. More often than not, our sources lack the relevant prosopographical data, but still some observations can be made. In his ground-breaking study of eight ecclesiastical provinces (Tours, Rouen, Sens, Rheims, Trier, Metz, Cologne and Besançon), Martin Heinzelmann found that out of the 179 bishops, whose social rank can be traced, only eight did not have a senatorial lineage.[25] Although it

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22 Karl Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen, 1948); Raymond Van Dame, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, 1985); Ralph W. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul: Strategies for Survival in an Age of Transition* (Austin, 1993).

23 See Michele R. Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2002).

24 On Sidonius Apollinaris, see *PLRE* 2: 115–118; Jill Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome* (Oxford, 1994).

25 Martin Heinzelmann, "L'aristocatie et les évêchés entre Loire et Rhin jusqu'à la fin du VIIe siècle," in *La christianisation des pays entre Loire et Rhin*, (ed.) Riché, 75–90. See also his *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien: Zur Kontinuität römischer Führungsschichten vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert. Soziale, prosopographische und bildungsgeschichte Aspekte*, Beihefte der Francia 5 (Sigmaringen, 1976); Steffen Patzold, "Zur Sozialstruktur des Episkopats und zur Ausbildung bischöflicher Herrschaft in Gallien zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter,"

would be too hazardous to argue that a similar ratio characterised the other 528 bishops, whose social rank we do not know, statistically Heinzelmann's findings are extremely significant. Almost 25% of his sampled bishops were members of the senatorial elite.

Was this influx of senatorial aristocrats to the ranks of the Gallo-Roman Church the result of pure Christian piety, or was it part of a calculated move of political expediency? Although Christian piety cannot be ruled out, it seems more likely that familial strategy, and a constant struggle to maintain power and control, were the case. As a result of the political and economic turmoil that characterised the western provinces of the later Roman empire, the late 4th and the early 5th century witnessed the disintegration of the Roman central governance in the West. Consequently, aristocrats ceased to take their duties (*liturgiae*) seriously, and the local governing bodies (*curiae*) were ground to a halt and eventually disappeared. At this crucial moment, the bishops of the Gallo-Roman Church stepped in and filled the shoes of local governors.[26] They were the only ones around who cared about their local communities, and therefore had no choice but to stretch their responsibilities beyond their call of pastoral duties. Practically, the bishops functioned as local governors – Martin Heinzelmann called it *Bischofsherrschaft* – and as time went by and no one challenged their authority, the episcopal position became an attractive trophy for members of the senatorial elite.[27]

The inevitable result of this course of events was that senatorial families geared themselves for the episcopal service, and by doing so created what are commonly known as 'episcopal dynasties'. Gregory of Tours' own family was such an episcopal dynasty. His uncle, Gallus, was the bishop of Clermont (*VP* 6); his great-grandfather and great-uncle on his mother's side, Gregory and Tetricius, were both bishops of Langres (*VP* 7); another great-uncle on his mother's side, Nicetius, was the bishop of Lyons (*VP* 8), a job he inherited from his father, Sacerdos (*VP* 8.3); and his mother's cousin, Eufronius, was Gregory's predecessor as the bishop of Tours (*Hist.* 10.31). Similarly, specific sees throughout Gaul, especially in the south, became 'familial sees'. Tours was such a see, and as Gregory himself relates, "with the exception of five bishops, all the others who have held the bishopric of Tours were descendants of my ancestors."[28]

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in *Völker, Reiche und Namen im frühen Mittelalter*, (eds.) Matthias Becher and Stefanie Dick (Munich, 2010), 121–140.

26   See Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien*; Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*.

27   See Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien*.

28   *Hist.* 5.49; trans. Murray, 118. On Gregory's family, see above, Martin Heinzelmann, ch. 1, and idem, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in Sixth-Century Gaul*, trans. Christopher

The gradual takeover of the higher ecclesiastical hierarchy by Gallo-Roman senatorial families benefited both the senatorial elite, who could maintain their central role and dominance, and the Gallo-Roman Church, which steadily sustained senatorial prestige as well as their economic resources. This transformation of power and riches is reflected, as we have just noted, in Remigius' letter to the young Clovis, and its results were still visible in the second half of the 6th-century. King Chilperic, according to Gregory of Tours, was constantly complaining about the dominance of the Frankish Church:

> "Look! Our fisc has been left poor," he often used to say, "and our wealth has been transferred to the churches. No one rules at all except the bishops; our office will perish and has been ceded to the bishops of the cities." This being his view, he would constantly invalidate wills made in favour of churches, and he trampled under foot the dispositions of his own father, thinking that no one was left to preserve his wishes.[29]

Leaving aside the bitter enmity between King Chilperic and the bishop of Tours, and the brutal attempt made by the latter to portray the king as the 'Nero and Herod' of his time,[30] Chilperic's complaint reflects a reality in which the Church was a powerful and rich institution.

Senatorial dominance over the ecclesiastical institutions of Gaul continued well into the Merovingian period. Gregory of Tours, as we have just seen, was very proud of his senatorial ancestry, and so were many of his colleagues.[31] However, during the 6th century some transformations took place. First, the bishops were no longer the sole actors on stage. In his letter to Clovis, Remigius realised that the situation was about to change, and hence he offered a pact to someone who was in the process of claiming the role of local governor. Clovis and his successors, in turn, divided their kingdoms among counts and dukes, who ousted the bishops from many of the 'secular' duties they had accumulated

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Carroll (Cambridge, 2001), 7–35; Ian N. Wood, *Gregory of Tours* (Bangor, 1994), especially 36–46; Ralph W. Mathisen, "The family of Georgius Florentius Gregorius and the bishops of Tours," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 12 (1984), 83–95.

29   *Hist.* 6.46; trans. Murray, *Reader*, 146.

30   See Guy Halsall, "Nero and Herod? The death of Chilperic and Gregory's writing of history," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchel and Ian Wood (Leiden, Boston and Köln, 2002), 337–350, and compare with Alexander C. Murray, "Chronology and the Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), 157–196.

31   See, for example, Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft*; Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats*.

throughout the years.[32] This new reality eventually led to some bitter clashes between bishops and counts, as witnessed by the tense relationship of Gregory, the bishop of Tours, with Leudast, the count of Tours.[33]

Second, with the introduction of new central and effective government by Clovis and his successors, and with the Frankish Church's growing awareness of its moral conduct and ideals, the ability of bishops to name their successors was severely reduced. Royal influence and control over episcopal appointments became standard, and hence restricted the ways in which bishops and other interested parties could intervene in the process.[34] This prerogative was almost never questioned by Church leaders,[35] not even by the Pope himself. Indeed, Gregory the Great was worried about simony in the Frankish Church,[36] and the Frankish Church councils tried to restrict royal intervention,[37] but none contested the actual fact that Merovingian kings had a crucial role in the appointment of bishops. This, however, must not be taken to imply that episcopal elections in 6th-century Gaul were free of local, familial, or personal interests. Bishops and the local citizenry could still influence and manipulate the process, but their ability to do so was much more restricted than it used to be.[38]

Finally, the survival of the senatorial elite as an exclusive group in 6th-century Gaul should not be taken for granted just because Gregory of Tour and a few of his contemporaries mention their senatorial heritage. The old Gallo-Roman nobility had to adapt itself to the changing reality of Merovingian Francia, and gradually ceased to exist as a separate social stratum. It was integrated into the newly forming Merovingian elite, and within two generations became a relic of a distant past.[39] Gregory of Tours, in this respect, was one of the last of the Mohicans. He never missed an opportunity to praise his senatorial ancestry and to stress its role as a social marker, but by the end of his life he was probably one of only a handful of bishops who could claim 'consistent'

32   Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 55–70, with further bibliography.

33   *Hist.* 5.47 and 49, and see the comments by Allen E. Jones, *Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul: Strategies and Opportunities for the Non-Elite* (Cambridge, 2009), 107–114.

34   Bruno Dumézil, "La royauté mérovingienne et les élections épiscopales au vie siècle," in *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, (eds.) Johan Leemans, Peter van Nuffelen, Shawn W.J. Keough and Carla Nicolaye (Berlin and Boston, 2011), 127–144.

35   For an exception, see *Hist.* 4.26.

36   See Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997), 171–174.

37   See Odette Pontal, *Histoire des conciles mérovingiens* (Paris, 1989), 258–260.

38   On the community *consensus* re an episcopal nominee, see above ch. 6 at n. 96.

39   See Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford, 2005), 168–203.

Gallo-Roman lineage. Many *'homines novi'* from lower strata of Merovingian society and from Frankish, or more precisely mixed Gallo-Frankish, origins paved their way to the highest ranks of the Frankish Church from the very beginning of the 6th century onwards.[40]

Against this background, the process that transformed the Frankish Church in the 6th century is quite unique and unprecedented. The political power of bishops was reduced significantly,[41] although we can still find very powerful bishops around, such as Gregory of Tours himself. The overwhelming control of the senatorial elite over the Church was drastically weakened, although members of a more comprehensive elite – the Merovingian elite – were still the most significant group of bishops whose social status we can trace. And, more importantly, in this new order, the authority of the Church and its leaders was closely connected with the power of the king. Merovingian bishops could have achieved nothing without royal support and sponsorship, and in turn their support was an indispensible requirement for royal authority.

Royal patronage was apparent not only in the appointment of bishops to vacant sees, but also in the sponsorship and support given by the Merovingian kings to their bishops in executing their duties. Once again the legacy of the Gallo-Roman Church provided a solid foundation. Beginning with the Council of Orléans, which was convened by King Clovis in 511,[42] a series of no less that forty-five provincial and national Church councils extends through the 6th century.[43] The Constantinian model of a ruler, who intervenes and summons bishops to discuss ecclesiastical matters, was always in the air, but Merovingian bishops enjoyed much freedom to discuss whatever they deemed appropriate and to decide on various measures, as long as these did not interfere with the public order, or threaten the authority of the king and his representatives. The fact that these councils were convened and backed by royal approval, gave them an immense authority to regulate, instruct, and reform.

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40   See Jones, *Social Mobility*, 74–128.

41   Merovingian Gaul still needs a dedicated study of its bishops. In the meantime, see Georg Scheibelreiter, *Der Bischof in merowingischer Zeit* (Vienna, 1983); and Michael E. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of the Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, DC, 2011).

42   *Concilium Aurelianense* (*10 Iul. 511*), in *Les canons des conciles mérovingiens* (*VIe–VIIe*), (eds.) Jean Gaudemet and Brigitte Basdevant, 2 vols, Sources chrétiennes 353–354 (Paris, 1989), 1:67–91. On this council, see Pontal, *Histoire des conciles*, 47–58; Gregory I. Halfond, *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, AD 511–768* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), *passim*.

43   For a list of these councils, see Halfond, *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils*, 223–235.

There was no apparent break between the preoccupations of the councils held in Late Antiquity and the later councils, attended by bishops from the whole of the Frankish kingdom. Their concerns were pretty much the same – doctrinal deviation; ecclesiastical orders; the morals and duties of the clergy, monks and nuns; property rights; royal influence and control over church affairs; the relations between the secular elite and the clergy; simony; charity; marriage; the administration of the sacraments; ordination; and excommunication.[44] The Merovingian bishops, it appears, were anxious to deal with all major aspects of ecclesiastical conduct in an attempt to shape the religion of their society in accordance with received Christian norms. Their achievement, as seen in the records of the 6th-century Church councils, is impressive.

In addition to their role in regulating and reforming the Christian life in 6th-century Gaul, the Merovingian Church councils were also a political stage, where bishops could fight each other over power, control and prestige, and where the king and his men could settle accounts with unfaithful bishops. Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen's trial before a council in Paris clarifies this point extremely well. After marrying the rebel prince, Merovech (†577), to his aunt, Brunhild (†603), the widow of King Sigibert I (†575),[45] Praetextatus was summoned by King Chilperic, Merovech's father, to a council in Paris, where he was accused of high treason, and where the bishops were asked to defrock him. Gregory of Tours and his colleagues refused the king's request, a courageous act on their part, which should not be taken lightly (*Hist.* 5.18). Praetextatus was exiled, and only after Chilperic's death in 584 could Praetextatus return to his see (*Hist.* 7.16). This incident and Gregory of Tours' own trial for treason and calumny at a council summoned by King Chilperic in Berny-Rivière (*Hist.* 5.49), demonstrate more than anything else the ways in which politics and Church affairs in Merovingian Gaul were tied together in an inextricable way.

7.4   Monastic Communities

Alongside the Merovingian episcopal Church, a thriving monastic community evolved in 5th- and 6th-century Gaul. Gregory of Tours was not really interested in the monastic houses of his time, unless they were the focus of a mini drama, such as the rebellion at the nunnery of the Holy Cross in Poitiers

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44   On the Merovingian Church Councils, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 94–109; Pontal, *Histoire des conciles*; Halfond, *Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils*; Moore, *Sacred Kingdom*, 52–84.

45   On this affair, see Bruno Dumézil, *Brunehaut* (Paris, 2009), 184–194.

(*Hist.* 9.39-43), but monasteries became an important feature of the Merovingian urban and rural landscape.

How the monastic idea reached the western provinces of the Roman empire is not entirely clear. Nevertheless, it appears that by the end of the 4th century, monasticism had already struck roots in Gaul. In 372, Bishop Martin of Tours had established a monastic community in Marmoutier,[46] and, at about the same time, Victricius of Rouen sponsored several monasteries in his diocese.[47] Yet, the most celebrated foundation of the time was that of a monastic community on an island off the shores of modern-day Cannes.

Shortly after 400, a Gallo-Roman aristocrat named Honoratus assembled a group of disciples and established a small monastery on the deserted island of Lérins.[48] Within less than three decades, when Honoratus himself left the island to become the bishop of Arles in 428, Lérins was already a thriving monastic community that attracted the best and the brightest young aristocrats from all over Gaul.[49] These young members of the Gallo-Roman elite spent some time in Lérins, and used their sojourn there as a jumping board for episcopal appointments. Once again we see the strong bonds that tied the local elites of late-antique Gaul with the evolving ecclesiastical institutions of the Frankish Church.

The monastic rule of Lérins did not survive, so it is impossible to reconstruct the daily routine of the Lerinian monks. Yet, we do know that John Cassian, who had visited Palestine and the Egyptian desert, and who had established the monastic community of Saint Victor in Marseilles, was an important influence

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46   Sulpicius Severus, *Vita sancti Martini*, 3.8, (ed.) Fontaine, 1: 343. See also Friederich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich. Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung* (*4. bis 8. Jahrhundert*), 2nd ed. (Munich, 1988), 19–46; Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Deset Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2000), 62–64.

47   Jacques Fontaine, "Victrice de Rouen et les origines du monachisme dans l'ouest de la Gaule (IVe–VIe siècle)," in *Aspects du monachisme en Normandie* (*IVe–XVIIIe S*), (ed.) Lucien Musset (Paris, 1982), 9–29.

48   See Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, 47–87; Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 82–84; Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 69–140. See also the various papers collected in *Histoire de l'abbaye de Lérins*, (eds.) Michel Labrousse et al. (Bégrolle-en-Mauges, 2005); and in *Lérins, une île sainte: de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge*, (eds.) Yann Codou and Michel Lauwers (Turnhout, 2009).

49   See Conrad Leyser, "'This Sainted Isle': Panegyric, Nostalgia and the Invention of Lerinian Monasticism," in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honour of R.A. Markus*, (eds.) William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor, 1999), 188–206.

on the community and its monastic perspective.[50] In any case, there was no single monastic rule that had to be followed strictly by all monastic communities in the West. Several experimental rules were composed and circulated in 5th and 6th-century Gaul, and community leaders could pick and chose whichever they deemed appropriate, or even compose one of their own.

The importance of Lérins went far beyond the fact that it became the melting pot of the future ecclesiastical elite of late-antique and early Merovingian Gaul. It also had a seminal role in the transmission and dissemination of monastic ideals to other parts of the West. Lérins' former graduates, who established themselves as dominant figures in pivotal ecclesiastical positions, founded numerous monasteries throughout Gaul, supervised them, and instructed their communities. Caesarius of Arles (†542) is an excellent example of such a Lerinian alumnus. In 512, Caesarius founded with his sister, Caesaria, the first nunnery in Arles; he composed two rules, one for nuns and the other for monks; and many of his sermons were intended to instruct the monastic communities in and around Arles.[51]

Whereas the monastic offshoots of Lérins were primarily confined to urban centres or their immediate surroundings, and were usually established by bishops with a monastic background, who, more often than not, also originated from the highest strata of the Gallo-Roman elite, a different trend of monastic foundations began its first steps roughly at the same time. Around 435, a young man from one of the lesser aristocratic families in the Jura region, Romanus, left his home to become a hermit in the forests that lay beyond his familial lands, where he was joined shortly by his brother, Lupicinus. After a large crowd of admirers had gathered around them, the two hermits founded the monasteries of Condat and Lauconnum, and a nunnery, La Balme, that was supervised by their sister.[52]

Although some affinities to Lerinian monasticism could be observed in Romanus' and Lupicinus' foundations, the Jura communities gradually moved away from the example of Lérins. Their leaders, if we are to believe our sources, resented the wealth and influence of Lérins. They displayed austerity in every aspect of everyday life, and they practised manual labour. They followed a full communal life and, more importantly, resisted the attempts made by bishops

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50   See Robert A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), 160–165. On Cassian and his contribution to Gallican monasticism, see Richard J. Goodrich, *Contextualising Cassian: Aristocrats, Asceticism, and Reformation in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Oxford, 2007).

51   On Caesarius and his activities, see William E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge 1994).

52   See *Vita Patrum Iurensium*, (ed.) and trans. François Martine, Sources chrétiennes 142 (Paris, 1968).

to control their establishment.[53] This shift in ideological emphasis, which complemented the move from urban centres to the countryside, as well as the attempt to break free of episcopal control, paved the way for later monastic enterprises in Gaul, and more particularly to the one associated with the Irish *peregrinus* Columbanus.

In 591, just when Gregory of Tours was concluding his *Ten Books of History*, Columbanus had landed in Francia with his companions, and initiated the next stage of Frankish monasticism.[54] Although Columbanus was critical of what he saw on the Continent, 6th-century Gaul was not a monastic desert, nor was its elite oblivious to the monastic idea. As we have just seen, the monastic landscape of 6th-century Gaul was constantly expanding thanks to a large amount of material resources and a strong tradition of patronage that were provided by members of the Gallo-Roman as well as Frankish elite. After all, Columbanus' monastic enterprise owed much of its phenomenal success to the close links that were formed between the local elites and the monastic movement in Gaul throughout the 5th and 6th century.[55]

The Irish monastic system, with which Columbanus was familiar before embarking on his Continental mission, was rather different from the one he encountered in Gaul. The strong Egyptian influence on Irish monasticism, especially through the writings of Cassian, is reflected in the harsh monastic regimen practised by Columbanus and his followers, which included many corporal restrictions and other disciplinary measures.[56] Similarly, Columbanus' vision of monastic independence was also shaped by his own experience in Ireland, where no diocesan organisation existed and where monasticism developed free of any episcopal control. This monastic vision brought about some severe clashes with certain Gallic bishops, who made heroic attempts to

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53   See Ian N. Wood, "A Prelude to Columbanus: the Monastic Achievement in the Burgundian Territories," in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, (eds.) H.B. Clark and M. Brennan, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 113 (Oxford, 1981), 3–32.

54   On Columbanus and his activities on the Continent, see the various papers collected in *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, (ed.) Michael Lapidge (Woodbridge, 1997); Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 158–190.

55   See Yaniv Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul: Columbanian Monasticism and the Frankish Elite* (Cambridge, 2014).

56   See, for example, *Vita sancti Comgalli*, c. 56, in *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, (ed.) Charles Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford, 1910), II, 20; See also Jane Stevenson, "The Monastic Rules of Columbanus," in *Columbanus*, (ed.) Lapidge, 203–216; Clair Stancliffe, "Columbanus's Monasticism and the Sources of his Inspiration: From Basil to the Master?," in *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in Honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards*, (eds.) F. Edmonds and P. Russell, Studies in Celtic History (Woodbridge and New York, 2011), 17–28.

subordinate the Columbanian monasteries to episcopal authority.[57] Moreover, Columbanus' Irish background also accounts for the many of the novelties he introduce to the liturgy, the practice of penance, and the regular discipline in Merovingian Gaul.[58]

The Columbanian monastic enterprise, whose first steps in Francia concludes the period with which we are concerned here, is, perhaps, the best attestation of the phenomena and trends that we have already identified in 6th-century Gaul. The intimate links between local elites and ecclesiastic endeavours, the fading centrality of urban centres, the generous royal patronage that was offered to ecclesiastical institutions, the loosening episcopal control over monastic centres, and, above all, the diversity and experimentation that characterised the Merovingian Church from its very beginning, are all palpable in the history of the so-called Columbanian movement on the Continent.

7.5   Pastoral Care

Although the image of the Merovingian bishops that emerges from the writings of Gregory of Tours is that of political activists and power-hungry aristocrats, the bishops of 6th-century Gaul were, first and foremost, the religious leaders of their communities. Their pastoral duties were taken seriously by most of them, and apart from celebrating the liturgy and the sacraments, they provided financial help, physical security, and mental consolation to those in need. Moreover, some of them took extra measures to educate their communities, and inculcate in the believers a sense of social and moral responsibility.

Caesarius of Arles, for example, was such a devoted bishop. According to his disciples, as recorded in his *vita*, he became such a dominant figure in the everyday life of the city, that at his funeral, "everyone – good and evil, just and unjust, Christians and Jews, those leading and those following the procession, called out together, 'Woe, woe, and more woe each day, for the world was not worthy to have such a herald and intercessor any longer'."[59] Not only did he

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57   See Columbanus, *Epistulae*, no. 2, in *Sancti Columbani Opera*, (ed.) G.S.M. Walker, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 2 (Dublin, 1957), 12–22.

58   On Columbanus' liturgical calendar, see Caitlin Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions: Conflict in the Early Medieval Church* (New York and Basingstoke, 2006), 19–44; on his penitential practice, see Thomas Charles-Edwards, "The Penitential of Columbanus," in *Columbanus*, 217–239; and on his regular novelties, see Stevenson, "Rules of Columbanus."

59   *Vita Caesarii* 2.49, (ed.) Germain Morin, *Sancti Caesarri episcopi Arelatensis Opera Omnia*, 2 vols (Maredsous, 1937–1942), 293–349. I cite the English translation of William E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters* (Liverpool, 1994), 65.

take care of the town's infrastructure, establish monasteries and a hospital, and give charity to the poor, he was also a keen preacher.[60] His *vita* tells us:

> He delivered sermons suited to particular feasts and scriptural passages, and also against the evil of drunkenness and lust, against discord and hatred, against anger and pride, against the sacrilegious and fortune-tellers, against the utterly pagan rites of the Kalends [of January], and against augurs, worshippers of trees and springs, and voices of different kind. He prepared these sermons in such a way that if any visitor requested them, he did not refuse to share them. Even if his visitor did not suggest that he ought to take any of them, Caesarius nonetheless offered them to him to read and brought them to him.[61]

Caesarius, so it seems, regarded preaching as the culmination of his pastoral duties, and invested much time and effort in order to execute it properly, and to instruct others on how to do it themselves. "He was so piously and energetically concerned for this duty that when sickness prevented him from carrying it out, he appointed and instructed priests and deacons to fulfil this task by preaching in church."[62]

Whereas the bishops were indeed the dominant figures in the pastoral scene of urban centres, most of the pastoral duties in Merovingian Gaul were carried out by local or itinerant priests. Unfortunately, the episcopal bias of our Merovingian sources yield very little information on those priests, their social background, their education, or their involvement in local politics. Consequently, unlike Merovingian bishops, who received much attention in modern scholarship, the amount of literature on Merovingian priests is surprisingly negligible, almost to the point of non-existence.[63] Nevertheless, an interesting liturgical document – the so-called Bobbio Missal – gives us a rare glimpse of a Merovingian priest and his pastoral duties.

The manuscript commonly known as the Bobbio Missal (Paris, Bibliothèque National de France, lat. 13246) is a small (187×95 mm.) liturgical compendium that was copied in south-eastern Gaul (probably in or around the city of Vienne)

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60   On Caesarius and his work, see Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*.

61   *Vita Caesarii* 1. 55; trans. Klingshirn, 37.

62   *Vita Caesarii* 1.54; trans. Klingshirn, 36.

63   Robert Godding, *Prêtres en Gaule mérovingienne*, Studia hagiographica 82 (Brussels, 2001), is the sole volume dedicated to Merovingian priests, but, alas, it has very little that is new in it, and it shirks formulating any thesis or synthesis.

in the last decades of the 7th century.[64] Although later than the period with which we are concerned here, this compendium reflects tendencies that had already started in the 6th century. It represent the liturgy that was celebrated in the Gaul from the 6th century onwards, and it appears that some notions, which originated in the Burgundian circles of Columbanus, had quite an influence on the compiler's decisions and choice of texts.[65]

Many characteristics of this volume, most notably its script, its layout, and its content, unambiguously point to the fact that it was primarily designed as a *vade mecum* for a Merovingian priest. This priest may have belonged to a community of clerics (which may even have been a monastery) who shared pastoral responsibilities, and offered liturgical services to the lay inhabitants of the region, as well as to monks and nuns. The liturgical content of the Bobbio Missal strengthen this impression, for it contains the most crucial aids that a priest might need in order to execute his pastoral duties: a selection of prayers and reading passages for the major feasts, a *canon missae* to guide him in celebrating the mass, a penitential to assist him in administering penance, and a whole range of canonical and doctrinal material. Hence, the Bobbio Missal, although intended as a practical tool for the use of a priest, is a gold-mine of information that sheds fresh new light not only on the liturgical practices and tradition prevailing in Merovingian Francia, but also on the education, qualification and training of a priest, the nature of his pastoral duties, and the environment he operated in. The Merovingian priest that emerges from this unique *vade mecum* is a rather enthusiastic figure, with some education, who provided pastoral care for various communities, and who could instruct his flock on various doctrinal issues. This is emphatically not the moronic Merovingian priest that later sources, especially from the Carolingian period, like to portray.[66]

7.6   The Liturgy of Sixth-Century Gaul

The Merovingian liturgy is, perhaps, the most eloquent witness to the various trends and transformations that swept the Frankish Church in the 6th-century.

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64   For an edition, see *The Bobbio Missal: A Gallican Mass-Book*, (ed.) Eias A. Lowe, Henry Bradshaw Society 58 (London, 1920).

65   On the Bobbio Missal, see the various papers in *The Bobbio Missal: Liturgy and Religious Culture in Merovingian Gaul*, (eds.) Yitzhak Hen and Rob Meens (Cambridge, 2004).

66   See, for example, Boniface, *Epistolae* 50–51 and 78, (ed.) M. Tangl, *Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, MGH Epistolae selectae 1 (Munich, 1916), 80–92 and 161–170 respectively.

Old traditions and experimental innovations, episcopal control and local independence, royal patronage and elite sponsorship, Christian piety and political expediency, were all part of the gradual formation of the Frankish liturgy during the 6th century. A closer look at the liturgy can give us a better understanding of the transformation that re-shaped the Frankish Church in 6th-century Gaul.

For more than three centuries the liturgy of Merovingian Gaul has been classified as 'Gallican' – a vague term that groups under a single rubric the various liturgical traditions of northern Italy, Gaul and Spain, assuming that they were all mere derivatives of the Roman rite.[67] However, this notion of liturgical formation has been rightly brought into question in recent years, and modern scholarship is extremely revealing how profoundly creative and dynamic was the liturgy of Frankish Gaul.[68]

Although very little can be said with certainty about the liturgical tradition of late-antique and early medieval Gaul, mainly because of lack of evidence, it appears that the 5th and the 6th centuries in Gaul were a period of liturgical creativity. Indeed Gregory of Tours, in his own conservative way, continued to use Sidonius Apollinaris' liturgical compositions, which he collected into a little book, and for which he even provided a new introduction (*Hist*. 2.22). But Gregory also mentions two attempts made in his lifetime to compose new prayers – one by the Merovingian King Chilperic (*Hist*. 6.46) and the other by Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen (*Hist*. 8.20) – both of which, not surprisingly, were greeted with contempt by Gregory himself. Furthermore, early medieval Gaul appears to have been particularly fertile in hymn production, as suggested by the hymns composed by Caesarius of Arles, Venantius Fortunatus, Flavius of Chalon-sur-Saône, King Chilperic, as well as sixteen anonymous ones.[69]

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67   On the so-called Gallican liturgy, see William S. Porter, *The Gallican Liturgy*, Studies in Eucharistic Faith and Prayer 4 (London, 1958). For further bibliography, see Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*, trans. and rev. William G. Storey and Niels K. Rasmussen (Washington, DC, 1981), 275–277.

68   See, for example, Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, AD 481–751* (Leiden, New York and Köln, 1995), 43–153; idem, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles the Bald (877)*, Henry Bradshaw Society, subsidia 3 (London, 2001), 21–41; Philipe Bernard, *Du chant romain au chant grégorien (VIe-XIIIe siècle)* (Paris, 1996); Matthieu Smyth, *La liturgie oubliée: la priére eucharistique en Gaule antique et dans l'Occident non romain* (Paris, 2003).

69   See József Szövérffy, *Latin Hymns*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental 55 (Turnhout, 1989), 39–40 and 130; idem, *Die Annalen der lateinischen Hymnendichtung* (Berlin, 1964), especially 111–66.

Luckily, our understanding of Merovingian liturgy does not depend solely on non-liturgical sources. Apart from the Bobbio Missal adduced above, a remarkable series of liturgical manuscripts bears witness to the prolific liturgical productivity of Merovingian Francia.[70] Although most of these liturgical manuscripts were copied in Gaul towards the end of the Merovingian era, they can still teach us a great deal about the liturgical trends and developments that emerged in the 6th century and continued well into the 7th and 8th centuries. After all, the sacramentaries and the lectionaries that these manuscripts transmit, are all based on earlier liturgical compositions, now lost, which were partly composed in Gaul, and partly adapted, paraphrased or simply reproduced from non-Gaulish liturgical traditions.

Delineating the various general characteristics of the Merovingian liturgy is extremely slippery, first and foremost because of its two principal characteristics, that is, diversity and eclecticism. A striking degree of diversity characterised the Merovingian rite, and it is apparent on two different levels of liturgical practice. On the first level, feasts for different saints were celebrated at various Merovingian centres, and thus turned the liturgical calendar into a very local one.[71] On the second level, is the variety of prayers and reading passages that were assigned to the masses in the sacramentaries and lectionaries. These reflect not only diversity in local custom and usage, but also distinct ideals and standards on the part of the composers.[72]

The diversity that characterised the Merovingian rite was considerably enriched by eclecticism. Merovingian liturgy was constantly under a variety of external influences, most notably Roman, but also Mozarabic (Visigothic), northern and southern Italian, and eventually, though long after Gregory's period, Anglo-Saxon; consequently many prayers and customs which originated outside Francia were embedded in the Frankish rite.[73] In turn, the

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70   On these manuscripts, see Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*. See also Philipe Bernard, *Du chant romain*; Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 43–60; idem, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy*, 21–41; Smyth, *La liturgie oubliée*, and see the references cited there.

71   See Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 82–120. See also Brigitte Beaujard, *Le culte des saints en Gaule: Les premiers temps. D'Hilaire de Poitiers à la fin du Vie siècle* (Paris, 2000).

72   See Yitzhak Hen, "Unity in diversity: the liturgy of Frankish Gaul before the Carolingians," in *Unity and Diversity in the Church*, (ed.) Robert N. Swanson, Studies in Church History 32 (Oxford, 1996), 19–30.

73   See, for example, Yitzhak Hen, "Rome, Anglo-Saxon England and the formation of the Frankish liturgy," *Revue Bénédictine* 112 (2002), 301–322.

Frankish liturgy itself influenced the liturgical development and creativity in Visigothic Spain, Anglo-Saxon England, northern Italy and even Rome.

Apart from diversity and eclecticism, the third major characteristic of the Merovingian liturgy is the language and style of its prayers, which are rather rhetorical and effusive. The verbosity and peculiar style of Merovingian liturgists is best manifested in the elaborate episcopal benedictions *ad populum*, which were basically a Gallican innovation devised by the Merovingian Church. These benedictions, unlike the Roman short formulaic and succinct ones, tend to be prolonged with a colourful language, full of images and ideas, and sometimes even opaque theology. No wonder Pope Zacharaias (†752) described them as vainglorious, and heartily advised Boniface not to use them.[74] Although at first glance these benedictions seem to be less cultivated and learned than their Roman counterparts, their florid style, with its liking for metaphor and biblical expressions, make them a unique witness to the liturgical vitality and creativity of Merovingian Gaul.

Other Merovingian peculiarities may be found in the liturgical calendar. For example, Rogation days are, as is commonly known, a special innovation of the Merovingian Church, and in Merovingian sacramentaries they always appear before Ascension Day.[75] Also, the feast of the *Cathedra Petri* was quite widespread in Merovingian Gaul, and in Merovingian sacramentaries it is immediately followed by the mass for the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.[76] To these one can add feasts in honour of typical Merovingian saints, such as Symphorianus and the 7th-century Leudegarius who are commemorated in the Gothic Missal,[77] or the early 6th-century Genovefa who is mentioned in the Lectionary of Luxeuil.[78]

Further characteristics can be found in the order of celebrating the mass. For example, it was common in Merovingian Gaul to have three readings of passages from the Bible during mass – one from the Old-Testament Prophets,

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74   See Boniface, *Epistola* 87, (ed.) Tangl, 198. On these episcopal blessings, see Eligius Dekkers, "'Benedictiones quas faciunt Galli': Qu'a voulu demander saint Boniface?," in *Lateinische Kultur im VIII: Jahrhundert. Traube-Gedenkschrift*, (eds.) A. Lehner and W. Berschin (Saint-Ottilien, 1989), 41–6.

75   See Joyce Hill, "The *Litaniae maiores* and *minores* in Rome, Francia and Anglo-Saxon England: Terminology, Texts and Traditions", *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000), 211–246.

76   See *Missale Gothicum*, 20.148–156, (ed.) Els Rose, CCSL 159D (Turnhout, 2005), 410–413, and see Rose's comments on 236–244.

77   *Missale Gothicum*, 61.414–418 and 63.425–431, (ed.) Rose, 507–509 and 512–515 respectively.

78   *Le lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, no. 16, (ed.) Pierre Salmon, Collectanea Biblica Latina 7 (Rome, 1944), 23–24.

one from the Gospels, and one from the Epistles.[79] Moreover, it was a normal practice in Merovingian Gaul to have the 'kiss of peace' before the eucharistic prayer, and it may well be that the episcopal benediction in Merovingian Gaul was given right after the *Pater Noster* and before communion.[80] Lastly, most Merovingian sacramentaries that survive contain a huge variety of votive and private masses for various occasions, which clearly indicate that Christianity had indeed penetrated every corner of everyday life, and that the Church made a considerable effort to be present at all the relevant junctions of the individual's life-cycle.[81]

Yet, the liturgy of Merovingian Gaul was not just an expression of personal Christian piety, it also had a very distinctive public and political dimension. During the second half of the 6th century a new doctrine of kingship evolved in the Merovingian kingdoms, and Christian themes came to dominate ideas of rulership and government. One manifestation of this shift of emphasis was the frequent recourse to biblical examples and citations, which denoted the new political thought.[82] Another manifestation was the emergence of liturgical patronage. Chants and prayers became an instrument by which heavenly protection could be sought for the benefit of the kingdom and its ruler, and consequently the patronage of liturgy became a major concern for the Merovingian kings and queens.[83] This liturgical interest had some considerable economic implications. Large amounts of landed property, precious objects and various immunities were bestowed upon monasteries and religious communities throughout Gaul in order to secure their spiritual support.

It was the Burgundian King Sigismund who first made an attempt to establish the *laus perennis* at the royal abbey of Agaune, after heaping on the monastery a huge amount of treasure and landed property.[84] Although unsuccessful in

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79   On the so-called Gallican reading system, see *Le lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, (ed.) Salmon, lxxxvii-xcii; Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 299–304, especially 303–304.

80   See Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 69–70.

81   For an interesting example, see Yitzhak Hen, "The Early Medieval *Barbatoria*," in *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, (ed.) Miri Rubin (Princeton, 2009), 21–24. See also Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 121–153.

82   See Yitzhak Hen, "The Uses of the Bible and the perception of kingship in Merovingian Gaul," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), 277–289; idem, "The Christianisation of Kingship," in *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Errinerung*, (eds.) Jörg Jarnut and Mathias Becher (Münster, 2004), 163–177.

83   See Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy*, 33–42.

84   See Barbara Rosenwein, "Perennial Prayer at Agaune," in *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society. Essays in Honor of Lester K. Little*, (eds.) Sharon Farmer and Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca and London, 2000), 37–56.

the long term, Sigismund's endeavour to institute a perpetual chant in Saint-Maurice, is an important turning point in the history of the royal patronage of liturgy in the early medieval West. Sigismund had set the tone, and the Merovingians followed suit. It is, then, no mere coincidence that several of the liturgical books from Merovingian Gaul contain prayers *pro rege*, *pro regibus*, or *in pace*, which beseech God to protect the kingdom's peace, to secure its stability, and to grant victory to the ruler.[85] The idea of such services was, no doubt, an inheritance of late antique and Byzantine traditions. Yet, the Merovingians harnessed those traditions and anchored them in a complex network of patronage, endowments and liturgical practice. Once again we see how various interests and mutual support tied the rulers of Francia with the Frankish Church and its representatives in a strong and extremely rewarding bond.

7.7   Conclusion

To sum up, any attempt to delineate the nature and character of the Church in 6th-century Gaul in a single and rather short chapter does less than justice to numerous issues and aspects that helped to transform the provincial Church of Late Antiquity into the glorious institution of the 6th century – an institution that produced bishops such as Gregory of Tours and Felix of Nantes, promoted ecclesiastical and monastic reforms, and encouraged liturgical creativity and intellectual curiosity. Choices are inevitable, and in the foregoing I have dwelled on those issues that seem most crucial for the understanding of the world in which Gregory of Tours lived and operated. By looking at the Frankish Church through the prism of 'structural *differentiation*', I hope I have managed to demonstrate how dynamic and innovative was the Merovingian Church, and how successful it was in coping with numerous complex challenges. No doubt the Church in the time of Gregory of Tours was a powerful institution, but its leaders had to work very hard to maintain this privileged position. Their achievement was remarkable, and it is thanks to their ability to adapt themselves, their organisation, and their traditions to the changing reality of the 6th century that future generations had a solid ecclesiastical foundation in Gaul.

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85   Some of these masses were analysed by Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), 344–7; Hen, "The uses of the Bible"; Mary Garrison, "The *missa pro principe* in the Bobbio Missal," in *The Bobbio Missal*, (eds.) Hen and Meens, 187–205.

Landscape and Material Culture of Gaul in the Times of Gregory of Tours According to Archaeology

Patrick Périn

8.1   Introduction

Every attempt to evoke the towns and countryside of Gaul in the times of Gregory of Tours involves a two-fold resort to historical and archaeological sources. Texts of the 6th century nevertheless make a limited contribution to the subject, for they are rarely descriptive, as the works of Gregory of Tours attest. He may point to numerous towns, without us always being able to establish whether he visited them or not, and he gives from time to time a few details on their topography. Likewise he mentions the names of a number of religious buildings erected both *intra* and *extra muros*. But it is clear that describing the towns of his age was not a priority for Gregory. The same goes for the works of Fortunatus, where we can glean, here and there, a few details on the religious monuments that adorned the towns.[1] As far as the countryside is concerned, Gregory's works, as well as those of Fortunatus, give more information, but it is of disconcerting and repetitive banality.

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1   Gregory of Tours: *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Historiarum libri X*, (eds.) B. Krusch and L. Levison, MGH SRM 1.1 (Hanover, 1951, rpt 1993); *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Miracula et opera minora*, (eds.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 1.2 (Hanover, 1885; rev. rpt 1969). Venantius Fortunatus: *Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati presbyteri Italici opera poetica,* (ed.) Friedrich Leo, MGH AA 4.1 (Berlin, 1881). The obligatory guide to interpreting Gregory's works is Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge, 2001); first published as *Gregor von Tours (538–594): "Zehn Bucher Geschichte." Historiographie und Gesellschaftskonzept im 6. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1994).

Archaeology, on the other hand, proves to be an irreplaceable and inexhaustible source of evidence.[2] The possibilities of urban excavations are many: partial recreation of town plans, the localisation of religious monuments mentioned in texts or previously unknown, and reconstruction sometimes of the architecture and decoration of buildings. In the case of the rural world, the contribution is just as critical, whether it be recreating the local countryside and its evolution in space and time, the settlements found there, or their agricultural environment, thanks to the possibilities provided by disciplines such as palynology, anthracology, and carpology (studying pollen, wood and charcoal, and seeds, respectively) and others. But one of the stumbling blocks of archaeological data is the establishment of reliable dates that allow the data to be enrolled with some precision in historical time and, in the present context, to the period when Gregory lived.

8.2 The Urban Landscape

These sources, whether texts or archaeological data, intersect, and their evidence shows that 6th-century Merovingian towns were the direct heirs of the towns of late Antiquity, despite some modifications of their fabric.[3]

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2 Margarete Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte der Merowingerzeit nach den Werken Gregors von Tours*, 2 vols, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Monographien 3 (Mainz 1981–82) systematically canvasses the subjects in Gregory's works, including those relating to the towns and countryside. *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois: Actes du Congrès international, Tours, 3–5 nov. 1994,* (eds.) Nancy Gauthier and Henri Galinié, Revue Archéologique, Suppl. 13 (Tours, 1997) presents a quite complete panorama, historical and archaeological, of Gaul in Gregory's time. And see Patrick Périn, "Settlements and Cemeteries in Merovingian Gaul," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, Cultures, Beliefs, and Traditions: Medieval and Early Modern Peoples 8 (Leiden 2002), 67–98.

3 A fine synthesis, still current but requiring updating on the basis of the continual progression of excavation, is *Histoire de la France urbaine*, (ed.) Georges Duby (Paris, 1980); see in particular Paul Albert Fevrier, "*Vetera et nova*: le poids du passé, les germes de l'avenir, IIIe–VIe siècle," 393–493. Still valuable is Carlrichard Brühl, *Palatium und civitas: Studien zur Profantopographie spätantiker Civitates vom 3. bis zum 13 Jahrhunderts*, 1:*Gallien* (Cologne, 1975). On the Merovingian palace, see also *Palais médiévaux (France-Belgique), 25 ans d'archéologie*, (ed.) A. Renoux, Actes du colloque international du Mans, 6–8 octobre 1994 (Le Mans, 1995); Nancy Gauthier "Le paysage urbain en Gaule au VIe siècle," in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois*, 49–63. There is invaluable information in the series of instalments, according to diocese, of the *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIIIe siècle*, (eds.) Nancy Gauthier, Jean-Charles Picard, et al. (Paris, 1986-); sixteen volumes have so far been published.

The chief towns of the cities (*civitas*, pl. *civitates*), acting also as episcopal seats, preserved their walls, some, as at Trier, Autun, Toulouse, or Fréjus, having been built in the early empire for reasons of prestige; but the majority went back to late empire. If the multiplication of the latter is indeed a result of Germanic raids that affected part of Gaul in the middle of the 3rd century, the building of them, contrary to a stubborn historiographical tradition now corrected by excavation, was not done in haste, but gradually from the second half of the 3rd century to the beginning of the 4th. The foundations of these walls were most often constructed by reusing blocks of stone conveniently removed from public buildings, probably disused, or from neighbouring funerary monuments. Many cities, such as Senlis, Le Mans, and Tours, still preserve to the present day stretches of these walls, which were provided with half-circular towers and monumental gateways flanked by rectangular towers; the mode of construction combined small dressed stones ('petit appareil') and courses of bricks (Figs. 8.1, 8.2). Such walls were of variable height. The area enclosed could range from 70 hectares (Metz), or 35 hectares (Rheims), to 18 hectares (Nantes and Rouen), or even 6 hectares (Tours) and 5 hectares (Geneva) – these last examples corresponded more to the size of a *castrum* (Fig. 8.3). The grand exception was Trier, at 285 hectares.

In the age of Gregory, these walls always separate clearly the world of the living and the world of the dead, a situation which, however, did not preclude
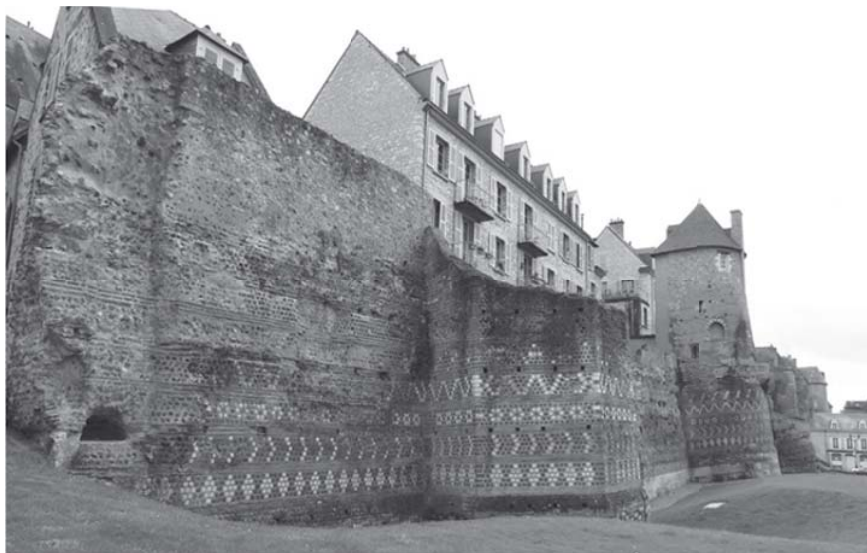
FIGURE 8.1   *Late Roman walls: Le Mans*
            PHOTO: VÉRONIQUE GALLIEN

FIGURE 8.2 *Late Roman walls: detail of the patterned stone and brickwork of the round tower*
PHOTO: A.C. MURRAY

the existence of areas *extra muros* (suburbs), future medieval 'faubourgs' for the most part. Nevertheless there were exceptions, such as Lyons, the former metropolis of the Gallic Provinces, a city never provided with walls; or Paris, where only the Île de la Cité was fortified, the town on the left bank remaining open and perhaps secured by fortification of the *forum* on the summit of the future Montagne Saint-Geneviève (Fig. 8.4).

As far as we can judge, and insofar as urban excavations are almost always of a limited area and tied to the vagaries of the modern urbanization process, these walls encompassed in the 6th century, as before, undeveloped or deserted areas, identified by so-called 'dark earth' characteristics, the interpretation of which is still controversial. Do these reveal abandoned areas or, on the contrary, the practice of agricultural cultivation and stock rearing *intra muros*?[4]

In Gregory's time, the layout of these urban assemblages still preserves that of Antiquity, with a grid pattern of streets and orthogonal roads, traces of which, just like that of the walls, are still visible today in many a former Gallic town.

The urban and suburban landscape of the 6th century was quite evidently punctuated by great public edifices, as for example at Paris the so-called 'Baths of Cluny,' without our being able to tell their state of preservation and the use

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4 The problem of "dark earth" is broached particularly in *Terres noires. Dark Earth*, (ed.) Laurent Verslype, and Raymond Brulet, Collection d'Archéologie Joseph Mertens 14 (Louvain, 2004).
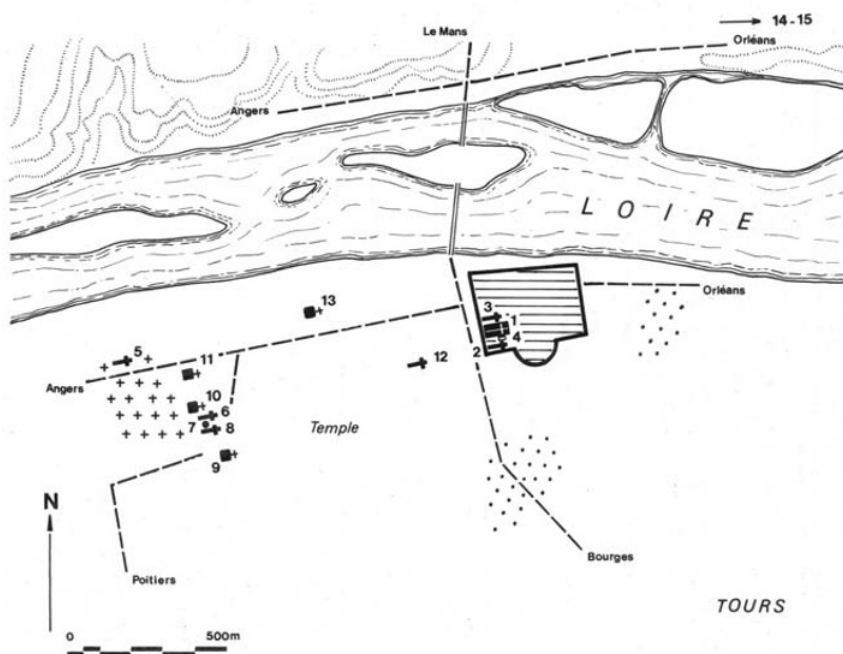
(from *Topographie chrétienne* 5)

Tours (churches and monasteries):
1-4. Cathedral group: *ecclesia*;   9. Saint Venantius   10. *monasterium virorum*
SS Gervasius and Protadius;   11. *cellula Sancti Monegundis*   12. Saint Vincent
Saint Mary; *domus*   5. Saint Litorius   13. Saint Julian   14. Holy Apostles
6. Saint Martin   7. Atrium of Saint Martin's   15. Saint John
  and associated structures   8. SS Peter and Paul

Key   ▦ Cathedral   ▭ Medieval Cathedral   ➤ Basilica   ■ Monastery   ● Baptistry
    ∵ Pagan or mixed cemetery   ⁺ Christian cemetery |||| Early Empire settlement area

FIGURE 8.3 *Plan of Tours in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*
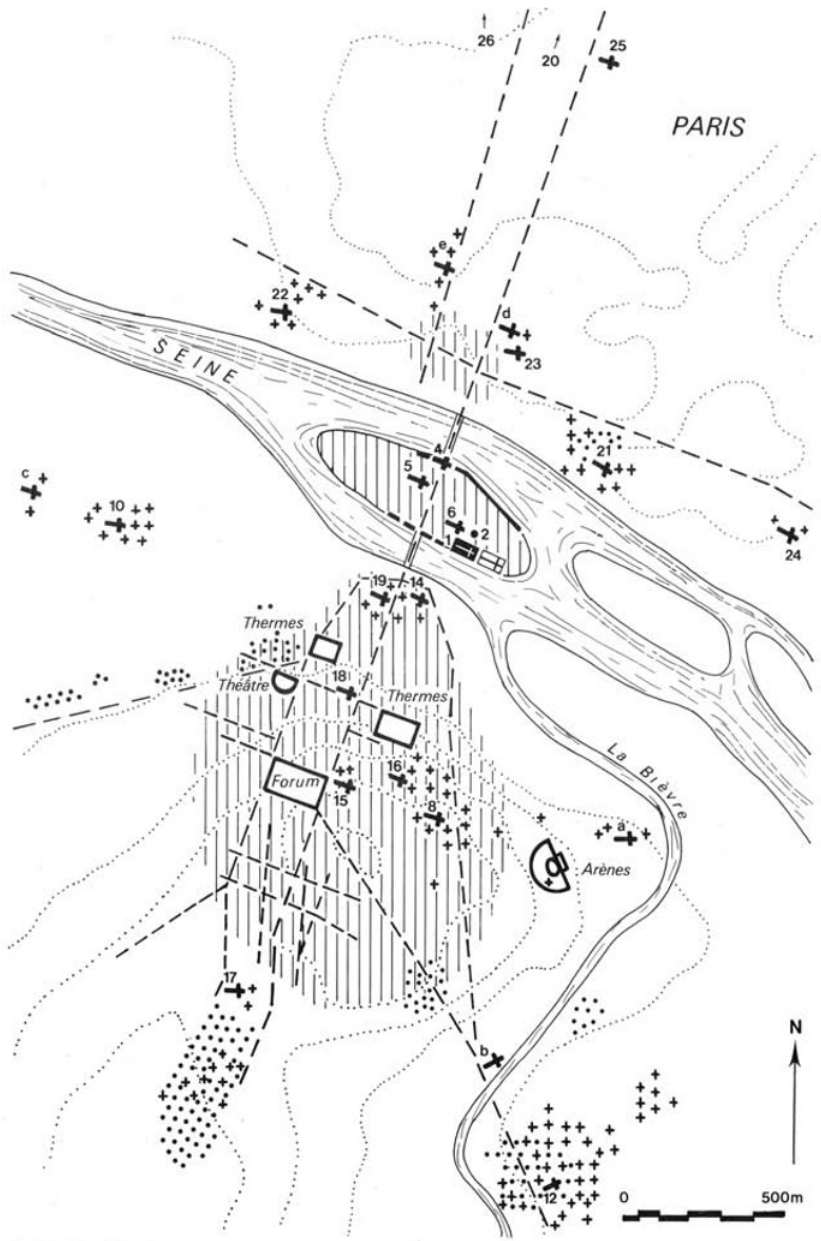
Paris (selected churches):

2. baptistry   4. Oratory of Saint Martin   (from *Topographie chrétienne* 8)

8. Holy Apostles   10. Saint Vincent   26. Saint Peter of Montmartre

12. Saint Marcel   14. Saint Julian   a. Saint Victor   b. Saint Medard

20. Saint Laurence   c. Saint Peter/La Charité

25. Saint Martin-des-Champs   d. Saint-Merri   e. Holy Innocents

Key   ▦ Cathedral   ▭ Medieval Cathedral   ➔ Basilica   ■✛ Monastery   • Baptistry

⠶ Pagan or mixed cemetery   ✛✛ Christian cemetery |||| Early Empire settlement area

FIGURE 8.4   *Plan of Paris in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*

put to them in the 6th century. Royal or comital residences which the texts mention can rarely be readily located. But in some exceptional cases, such as Cologne and Paris, where archaeology attests to it, the royal residence certainly seems to have taken over that of the Roman governor.

In some cases, *intra muros*, the archaeological data can suggest reutilization of these public buildings as living space. Structures in wood, identified by post holes and ditches – pointing to 'squaterrisation,' the unregulated occupation of the urban fabric, so the claim goes – are signalled here and there inside the urban walls. Nevertheless, it still seems that the building patrimony of late Antiquity would be largely utilized, admittedly with transformations that archaeological excavations sometimes allow us to grasp. This is what Gregory corroborates when he mentions at Tours multi-story buildings, whose antique origins are not in doubt. Just as today, when in many French towns people still live in edifices built in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, surely buildings constructed two or three centuries earlier continued to be occupied in the 6th century. One can also add that, according to Gregory, Chilperic seems to have reused the ancient circuses of Paris and Soissons to give games. We do not know if the urban baths had preserved their functions in the 6th century, but it appears certain that the conduits for water were always in use and that the principal routes linking the cities together were maintained.

If in Gregory's day the character of the town remains thus strongly marked by the topographical heritage of late Antiquity, considerable transformations are still apparent. Above all these are the consequence especially of the multiplication of Christian sanctuaries from the 4th century, but especially from the 5th and 6th centuries.

In the course of the 4th century, the chief town of the city (*civitas*) everywhere became endowed with a cathedral, which is always built from the beginning *intra muros* and not, according to another tenacious tradition, in a cemetery *extra muros* before being transferred subsequently inside the walls.[5] In the majority of cases these primitive cathedrals are built near the rampart of the town and bring about important transformations of the urban fabric, with the levelling sometimes of an entire quarter. This is because what is involved is not a single edifice but, from the beginning or at least quickly, an 'episcopal group.' It consists most often of a double cathedral, which is to say two

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5   On religious structures, their architecture, and decoration: besides the collective work, *Naissance des arts chrétiens*: *Atlas des monuments paléochrétiens de la France,* (eds.) Noël Duvall et al. (Paris, 1991), see *Premiers monuments chrétiens de la France*, (ed.) Imprimerie nationale, 3 vols (Paris, 1995, 1996, 1998). May Vieillard-Troïekouroff, *Les monuments religieux de la Gaule d'après les œuvres de Grégoire de Tours* (Paris, 1976) is still invaluable.

basilicas built side by side or in a line, the more imposing one being the church of the bishop and the other – though the question remains controversial – being that of the catechumens. Add to that a nearby and separate baptistery, the residence of the bishop and, very frequently, one or more monasteries, as well as a *xenodochium*, a place to receive pilgrims and the sick. As the excavations of the cathedral of Saint-Pierre of Geneva show magnificently, such monumental ensembles were completed by pathways lined with porticos.

There is thus a veritable ecclesiastical zone that occupied an entire quarter of the town, like that taken up by the palace of the count or king. As the excavations at Geneva, Cologne, Lyons, and a good many other towns, attest, these episcopal groups were from their building made the object of very many modifications particularly linked to successive expansions (Figs. 8.5a, b).

Churches, still in limited number, were present in the 6th century *intra muros*, without their status and function being clear to us; their role as parish churches has been suggested.

From the 6th century, funerary basilicas were built in cemeteries *extra muros* at the presumed site of holy tombs, namely those of martyrs or less often confessors like Saint Martin at Tours or Saint Lawrence de Choulans at Lyons (Fig. 8.6). These churches attract burials *ad sanctos*, not only on their periphery but also even inside their walls. If the majority of funerary basilicas of late Antiquity and the beginning of the Merovingian age have been erected on cemeteries going back to the late Empire and were still used in the age of Gregory – the examples are very numerous – it is nevertheless necessary to mention the foundations *ex nihilo*. For example, on the return of Childebert's expedition from Spain, from where he brought back the renowned relics of the true cross and the tunic of Saint Vincent, the king erected the basilica of Sainte-Croix-et-Saint Vincent on fiscal property located to the west of the Merovingian quarters on the right bank. This funerary basilica, consecrated in 558, became the principal royal mausoleum of the Merovingian dynasty, but would also be the beginning of an important necropolis *ad sanctos*. These funerary basilicas were dedicated to the memory and veneration of the saints and often include a system of subterranean passages allowing access to the *martyrium* or to the *memoria*; there was to be found the venerated tomb, the sarcophagus of which was elevated and visible. Among other examples, mention can be made of the sanctuaries of Saint-Victor at Marseilles, of Saint-Germain at Auxerre, of Saint-Pierre at Vienne, and Saint-Just at Lyons.

Many times, as at Tours, Clermont, or Rheims, satellite sanctuaries, even a *xenodochium*, are added to the principal sanctuary, transforming this area *extra muros* into a *vicus christianorum*, to repeat Gregory's expression, ancestor of an important medieval 'faubourg.'
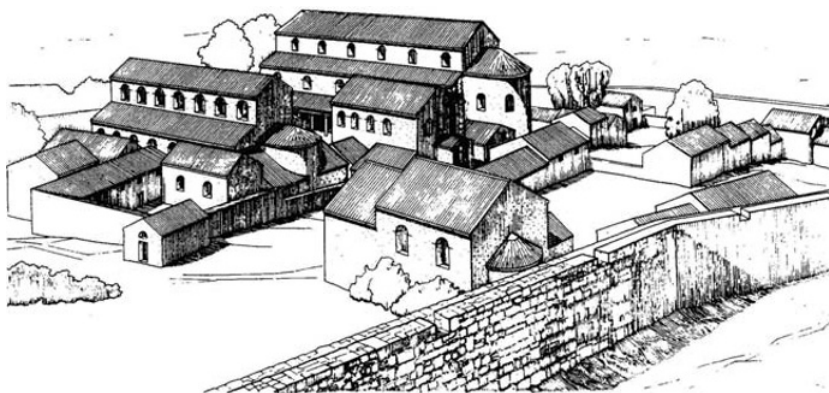
(By Charles Bonnet in Périn and Feffer, *Les Francs*)

FIGURE 8.5   *a. Episcopal group at Geneva: reconstruction ca 500*

ETAT I
IV°–V° s.

ETAT II
V° siècle

1. North Cathedral
2. South Cathedral
3. Baptistry
4. Chevet of new
cathedral (9th-10th c.)
5. Episcopal residence1.

(From *Topographie chrétienne* 5)

FIGURE 8.5   *b. Episcopal group at Geneva: plan of excavation (4th-6th centuries)*
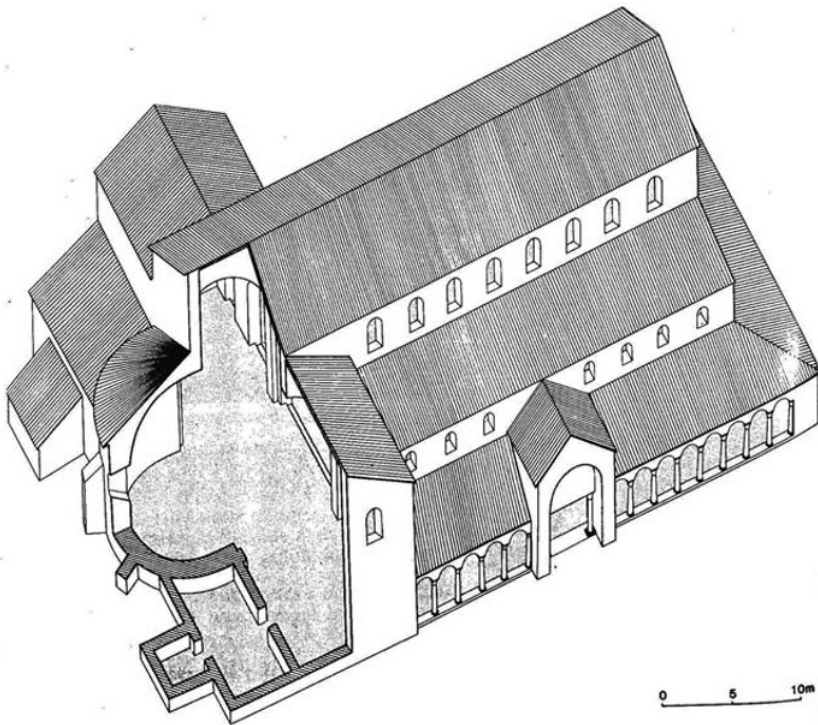
(From Reynaud, *Lyon au premiers temps chrétiens*)

FIGURE 8.6 *Reconstruction of funerary basilica of Saint Lawrence, Lyons*

Monasticism appeared in the south of Gaul in the 5th century with founda-
tions of Saint Honoratus on the island of Lérins, Cassian at Marseilles, Saint
Martin at Tours, Ligugé and Marmoutier, or even of Saint Hilary at Poitiers.
Though not yet structured, it developed rapidly.[6] In the times of Gregory of
Tours one can count about 220 monasteries, urban and suburban in Gaul –
there would be more than 600 at the end of the 7th century. Unfortunately

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6   On monasteries: Friederich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft
in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung (4. bis 8.
Jahrhundert)*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1988) is still unavoidable. For urban monasteries, see Hartmut
Atsma, "Les monastères urbains du nord de la Gaule," in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*
62 (1976), 163–187; also Jacques Biarne, "L'espace du monachisme gaulois au temps de
Grégoire de Tours," in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois*, 115–138.

archaeological access to the hundred or so urban, or especially, suburban, monasteries mentioned by the texts, the latter in general associated with martyr complexes like Saint Martin of Tours, is almost non-existent. With the exception of some traces of the foundation of primitive monastic churches, as Saint Remigius of Rheims, Saint Severinus of Bordeaux, Saint Germanus in Auxerre, Saint-Denis and Saint Germain-des-Prés, etc., remnants of conventual buildings properly called are completely lacking, the development of these monastic establishments, when they have not disappeared, having brought about the destruction of their primitive traces. A rare exception is without doubt that of some monastic cells brought to light at Saint-Cybard de Périgueux.

As regards cathedrals and basilicas of the urban and suburban variety, there is little to choose between the quality these religious monuments and those of Italy, as indeed Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus give us to understand and archaeological excavations confirm. We are dealing here with vast structures, most often of the basilica type (though there are some examples of cruciform layout), whose walls are built of 'petit appareil' of small squared stones with rows of flat brick. Their naves are not vaulted, and the roofs, covered in tiles and sometimes in sheets of copper, are carried by a timber-frame visible to the eye. In general an atrium preceded these sanctuaries, whose periphery was lined with porticoes used for funerary purposes. The outside decoration seems to have been limited on the roofs to terra cotta antefixes with a stylized face of the cross-bearing Christ and to bricks whose chamfered edges carried a border of geometrical design. On the other hand, interior decoration of these buildings, as described by authors of the time or revealed by archaeology, is very rich: columns and capitals of marble (often of antique origin), mosaics, pavements and wall coverings of marble, paintings, stucco, carved wooden panels, chancels of stone or marble, and so on. As almost the totality of these palaeochristian and Merovingian buildings have been destroyed at the time of Carolingian and later reconstructions, accessing them in architectural or ornamental terms is clearly limited but confirms that the monumental finery of Gaul in the 6th century was comparable to that of other provinces of the Roman empire, such as Italy or Spain, where the architectural patrimony of the very early Middle Ages has been better preserved.

One cannot finish this survey of the urban landscape of Gaul in Gregory's day without touching on the secondary 'agglomerations' or urban settlements. From the time of Antiquity each city (*civitas*) was comprised not only of its chief town but of many settlements of the type that we can call towns because of their topographical organization and monumental appearance. With some

exceptions (Dijon, for example), these small towns did not have walls. From the 4th century, as with the *civitas* capitals, they were provided with christian shrines, some located in their centre, some in the cemetery or cemeteries lying on their periphery. The lack of a wall clearly defining the space of the living and that of the dead explains why, much earlier than in the walled towns, burials associated with the cult places established even within these secondary towns are found from the 6th century on (as at Montcy-Saint-Pierre, in the Ardennes and at Vieux, in the Calvados).

8.3   The Rural Landscape

The works of Gregory of Tours, like those of Fortunatus, give us of course information on the countryside in their time. But usually this involves references of the banal and repetitive sort.[7]

And so Gregory refers to 'chateaux' with significant walls and numerous gates, within the enclosures of which fields and fruit trees are cultivated; *villae* – great estates – exploited by a numerous workforce; *vici*, that is villages or little towns on dusty roads; and isolated huts beside the roads.[8] He also mentions monasteries, with well kept gardens; water mills, with water flowing along tailraces; cemeteries, where sometimes a local saint is buried; oratories in the middle of the fields; and a leprosarium. Highways and roads, in his view, are badly maintained and sunken by the passage of carriages and oxen, and so travellers were constrained to walk on the grassy shoulder of the roadway. Gregory rarely mentions bridges. Nor are there descriptions of *villae*. As for the dwellings in *vici* and their agricultural hinterland, they are often adjoined and are prone to fires. Breaking in is easy for they are made of planks or of wattle-and-daub, with roofs of thatch. The bishop of Tours underlines the small size of these habitations and their wooden furnishing – table, seats, benches, and beds. No reference is made to hearths in these houses where light could be obtained for candles of wax or papyrus.

The description of the rural countryside strictly speaking is practically absent, but Gregory likes noting the enclosed gardens that are the object of his

7   For nteresting information, but requiring updating on the archaeological side: *Histoire de la France rurale*, vol. 1, (eds.) Georges Duby and Armand Wallon (Paris, 1975); see esp. Guy Fourquin, "Le premier Moyen Âge," 291–319.

8   Claude Lorren and Patrick Périn, "Images de la Gaule rurale au VIe siècle," in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois,* 93–109, provide a survey of passages from Gregory relating to the rural world as well as an account of corresponding archaeological data.

attention, and vegetables and fruits, in addition to barley or wheat bread, composing the daily sustenance of the peasantry. References with regard to working the fields are frustratingly banal and most often come under the heading of anecdote, where great landlords deal with an abundant workforce or some peasants possess a plough harnessed to two oxen. Gregory takes more of an interest in vineyards. He hardly mentions the raising of livestock, though the presence of herds of sheep and pigs is noted here and there. On the other hand, the presence of the forest is obvious in his writings. He lists a number of species (plum trees, apple trees, elder trees, hazel trees, pear trees, blackberry bushes, chestnut trees, medlar trees etc.) as well as animals (wolves and, in the Vosges, buffalo). It is in the forests that the peasants pasture their pigs, harvest wild fruit and edible roots and collect swarms of bees. He even mentions the hunting of boar and deer with dogs, or the trapping of birds, as well as the setting of fishing weirs in rivers.

Finally Gregory gives some material on food: chicken and fish for feasts; for daily fare, at least among the peasantry, bread, vegetables, and dairy products. Meat is rarely mentioned, likewise Mediterranean foodstuffs, like dates and olives. On many an occasion, there are references to wine, beer, and cider.

It is fitting to supplement this generalized description of the countryside of the time as given by Gregory of Tours with the assistance of archaeology.[9] Like urban archaeology, archaeology of the countryside is largely a recent development in France. For a long time limited to cemeteries, archaeology of the rural Merovingian world has witnessed in the last decades the multiplication of settlement excavation connected with construction (of highways and high speed rail lines, as well as suburban and rural development), and spectacular consecutive advancements in research methods, developed or adapted for the occasion.

The reality, however, is that reading the levels of occupation of urban dwellings of late Antiquity, always occupied in the 6th century, is as complex as deciphering the palimpsest of the rural terrain. The archaeological 'structures'

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9   For excavations recently in villages, revealing at least Merovingian origins, see *Archéologie du village, archéologie dans le village dans le nord de la France* (*Ve-XIIIe siècles*)*,* Actes de la table-ronde des 23–24 novembre 2007, Musée d'Archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Mémoires publiés par l'Association française d'Archéologie mérovingienne (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2013). See also Patrick Périn, "The Origin of the Village in Early Medieval Gaul," in *Lanscapes of Change: Rural Evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,* (ed.) Neil Christie (Ashgate, 2004), 255–278.

that correspond to rural settlements and their adjoining areas only appear as 'negatives' in the ground, levelled for the most part for centuries. The focus of investigation involves post holes that may correspond to houses or to storehouses, or excavations interpreted according to case as 'foundations of huts,' of kilns, of silos or of wells (Figs. 8.7, 8.8). The topographical disposition of these archaeological structures, often grouped and defined by ditches attesting to enclosures, are interpreted as 'agricultural units,' without our being able to determine if they were owned by free peasants or were dependent on public or private great estates, often called *villae*.

FIGURE 8.7   *Rural buildings: open air reconstruction of various building types* (*Musée des temps barbare de Marle, Aisne*)
PHOTO: P. PÉRIN

Sequence of Construction:
a. posts and beams to support the construction
b. intermediary stakes to support the wattle
c. wattle: branches interlaced horizontally
    between the stakes
d. application of daub, or cob,
    to coat the surface

(b, c, from Remy Guadagnin, *Un village au temps de Charlemagne*)
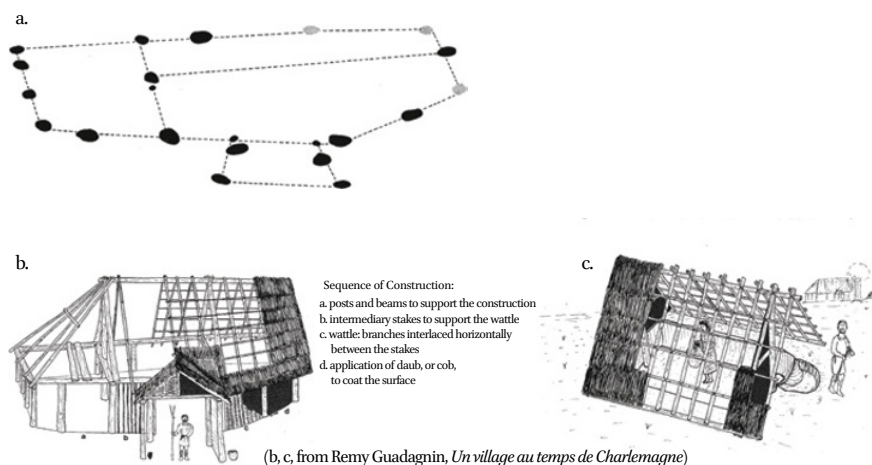
FIGURE 8.8   *Reconstruction of rural buildings a. pattern of postholes for a building b. reconstruction of the building c. reconstruction of a 'hut' ('cabane')* (*Villiers-le-Sec*)

As for the royal *villae* mentioned by the texts principally in the northern half of Gaul in the 6th century (Clichy and Chelles near Paris, Le Vaudreuil near Rouen, Vitry-en-Artois, and many others) where the court could stay, notably in hunting season, they escape even to the present archaeological investigation. The most plausible explanation is that the residences are situated under the towns and villages of which they have been the origin.

If the archaeological structures of the rural settlements, standard from the Loire to the Rhine, are henceforth well recognized from the 7th century onwards and up to the 9th-10th centuries, they remain rare for the 6th century – and that requires an explanation.[10]

The distribution of Merovingian cemeteries from the end of the 5th and 6th centuries to the beginning of the 7th century testify to their obvious topographical relation to a number of 'ancient' villages that appear notably on the 18th-century Cassini map. Indeed, the numerous excavations, old and new, show that it is on the outskirts of these village that early Merovingian cemeteries have been unearthed, a circumstance that postulates a Merovingian origin at least for these villages, an idea some researchers have wrongly contested. Indeed excavations conducted recently associated with Merovingian cemeteries, especially in the valley of the Moselle in Lorraine, have proven that the cemeteries coincided well with settlement structures from the beginning of the Merovingian epoch, which could have succeeded Gallo-Roman, even Gallic, settlements.

On the other hand, the hundreds of settlement sites that have been revealed by excavations of the last thirty years, conducted well away from present day villages – the majority of which, as we have just seen, existed from the Merovingian period – for the construction of highways or high speed rail lines, were only created from the second half of the 7th century and on; this circumstance is explained by privileged climate conditions, tied to demographic progression that required the extension of arable lands. These new settlements, well known to archaeology since they escaped the obliteration suffered by earlier settlements, were thus integrated into the network of existing villages which they supplemented, thereby forming a rural countryside more densely inhabited and cultivated than in the time of Gregory. However, they gradually disappeared between the 9th and 11th centuries, which can be explained by the

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10   For the structures of rural settlement in the north half of Gaul, see the monumental synthesis of Edith Peytremann, *Archéologie de l'habitat rural dans le nord de la France du IVe au XIIe siècle,* 2 vols, Mémoires publiés par l'Association française d'Archéologie mérovingienne 13 (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2003).

seigneurial restructuring of the land, though some places of worship with funerary associations were able to continue for some period of time.

And so one must envisage for the times of Gregory of Tours, at least for the northern half of Gaul, a rural countryside close to that of late Antiquity, with incertitude weighing upon the survival of the *villa* system; archaeology attests to some *villae* still being occupied. This countryside then became denser for two or three centuries before becoming, once again, much the same as before – the latter is what the Cassini map reproduces.

As has been established, the few excavations of 6th-century rural settlement, as for example, Goudelancourt-les-Pierrepont and Juvincourt-et-Damary (Aisne) or Passy (Yonne), among others, do not show notable differences from sites subsequently discovered, having 'agricultural units' of the same configuration. It is important to note that from the 6th century on some of these villages were provided with a funerary chapel, built in the cemetery adjacent to the settlement and constructed as a place of burial by the local elites who have been found there. Some of these chapels will be the beginning of parish churches, which even til today remain associated with the cemetery on the outskirts of villages. But most of the time it was in the very heart of the villages that, from the Merovingian period on, the first parish churches were set, the cemeteries being shifted or, on the contrary, left on the outskirts of the village, anchored by the primitive cemetery chapel.

As for the 'chateaux' that Gregory mentions – one can think of the description that Fortunatus gives of the fortified residence of Bishop Nicetius of Trier on a bend of the Moselle river – the archaeological data remains very limited, with the exception of the site of Larina at Hières-sur-Amby (Isère). On this steep promontory dominating the confluence of the Rhône and Ain, occupied since prehistory, a fortified settlement developed in the late Empire; destroyed in the 6th century, it was reconstructed and became a Merovingian seigneurial *villa*.

Resting on the study of narrative sources (Gregory of Tours' for instance) and administrative documents (such as the polyptiques), our knowledge of Merovingian agriculture is today supplemented by archaeological data, which in the present state of research pertain above all to the northern half of Gaul. Thanks to palynologic analysis (studying spores and pollen), the environment of excavated villages can be reconstructed, whether the natural milieu or farmed crops.

Anthracology, the study of the wood charcoal of fireplaces, allows determination of species, growing naturally or planted by man. As for carpology, the discipline studying the small remainders of vegetation, it provides precious information not only on seeds and fruits, but also on vegetation used in daily life (roofing for houses, fibres used for clothing, etc.).

Tools of iron, contrary to what has often been written, were very common. Archaeological finds, more and more numerous, show indeed that everywhere there was iron ore, it was reduced on the spot in efficient traditional smelters. Thus is explained the presence on settlement sites of iron implements and tools which were not made the object of recycling because they could be renewed without difficulty.

Land was worked with the help of simple ploughs of wood with iron ploughshares (for which there is archaeological evidence), which were hitched to a horse or an ox. The existence of heavy ploughs (already known in the Germanic world) appears not yet to be attested in Merovingian Gaul, and there was only traction provided by the draft animal's throat (the diffusion of the shoulder collar coming later).

Sowing, done by hand, took place generally in spring (oats) and in autumn (barley, wheat, rye). Triennial rotation was already practised, at least on the great estates, with the succession of two periods of sowing followed by a period of fallow (or even the planting of legumes, such as beans, likely to enrich the soil with nitrogen). Harvesting was done with a sickle, or indeed the scythe (there are some archaeological examples), the cereal crops being then beaten with a flail, winnowed, and preserved in subterranean silos, or stored temporarily in the ear in raised granaries before threshing. Banks of kilns, revealed in recent excavations of villages, seem to have been related to the drying of some cereals, and indeed the roasting of others such as barley (combined with wheat and beans) for the production of beer. If Merovingian written sources, unlike those of the Carolingian period (though their interpretation is still controversial), do not allow estimations of agricultural yields, archaeological discoveries nevertheless tend to show that production should not be underestimated. The widespread use of iron agricultural tools attests to this, as does the high number of storage places that prove the existence of surplus.

The cultivation of fruit trees and vineyards was also widespread, as Gregory attests and the results of archaeology confirm.

This brief description of rural Gaul in the time of Gregory of Tours, recounted with the help of archaeological evidence, deserves *in fine*, to be supplemented. Besides the secondary towns, mentioned above, the little towns and grand villages, which accentuate the mesh of the rural landscape, it is fitting again to mention the monasteries which were still small in number in the countryside of Gregory's day.[11] The role of these monastic communities was certainly important in a period when, if we except the early funerary chapels connected to the local aristocracies, parishes were still not systematically established in villages.

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11   For rural monasteries, see Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich.*

Some archaeological traces of these first rural monasteries are known to us but remain meagre compared to much greater evidence due to the expansion of monasticism in the 7th century, notably under the impetus of Saint Columbanus. One of the best archaeological examples of a 6th century rural monastery is Ligugé, founded not far from Poitiers by Saint Martin around 360. But as in the case of contemporary urban and suburban monasteries, the monastic structures (cells, cloister, etc.) escape us, unlike the actual buildings of worship.

8.4 Material Culture of Everyday Life

As concerns urban living conditions in Gregory's time, archaeological evidence of daily life is meagre because of the later reuse of housing sites, and is generally limited to a few remnants of tableware (glass and especially ceramic) or food storage and cooking vessels of a cruder type; there are also a few domestic metal objects. Conditions are more or less the same for country sites where, as we have seen, there has been little excavation done for the 6th century because of their location under present-day villages. And so, our best source for revealing Merovingian material culture in Gregory's day remains cemeteries where 'furnished' inhumation was largely the practice in the northern half of Gaul.[12] This custom, little practised in the first centuries of our era by the Franks across the Rhine, who in any case cremated their dead, was in decline in the 4th and especially the 5th centuries in the Roman provinces of northern Gaul, as elsewhere in the Empire. It must have been revived in a spectacular fashion in northern Gaul by Germanic migrants, in particular the Franks, whom the Roman authorities recruited as military auxiliaries and, from the 4th century, settled between the Rhine and the Seine in order to establish the defence in depth of the territory in a framework of a system close to that of the future 'gendarmerie.' Dispersed over the countryside in small groups, with their families, they exercised police functions and supervised the civil population in threatening situations, being able to arm and assemble them in fortified spots.

In order to assert their social status, these Germanic auxiliaries of the Roman army and their fellows adopted inhumation and were buried with lush furnishings: weapons for the men (including swords, axes, spears, and

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12   The question is broadly treated in Patrick Périn and Laure-Charlotte Feffer, *Les Francs*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1997). See also Alain Dierkens and Patrick Périn, "Death and burial in Gaul and Germania, 4th-8th century," in *The Transformation of the Roman World. AD 400–900*, (eds.) L. Webster and M. Brown (London, 1997), 79–95.

shields – an assemblage not in accord with Roman practice), jewellery of a Germanic type for women (who wore two pairs of fibulae, one pair a so-called 'bugle' type on the shoulders, the other a so-called 'crossbow' type on the breast), and belt buckles and buckle plates produced in Roman workshops; terra cotta, glass and bronze vessels of Roman origin were also plentiful in the tradition of Roman 'funerary tableware.'[13]

In the course of their advance in northern Gaul during the second half of the 5th century, the Franks of Chlodio, Childeric, and then Clovis themselves adopted these funerary customs (Fig. 8.9).[14] It is thus because of them that a large part of the material culture of northern Gaul in the times of Gregory of Tours is known:[15] weapons for men (swords, spears, angons, axes, short swords or scramasaxes, shields, and much more rarely helmets and pieces of riding gear); for women, jewellery, and, among other features, the traditional wearing of two pairs of fibulae, one set placed on the neck or the breast, closing a tunic or a veil, the other on the pelvis – significance here is still contested (clasps for the bottom of a mantle or of a belt, if not simple ornamental broaches). Men and women at the time wear buckles and buckle-plates of various types and, in the grave, are accompanied by a limited amount of tableware made of terra-cotta or glass, and sometimes of bronze.

The cemeteries of the 6th century which have supplied such objects are only infrequently urban (these having been destroyed by later cemeteries); they are rural, where often the local elites, born of the Frankish warriors that Clovis dispersed at the time of his conquests to control the majority Gallo-Roman population, are distinguished by the quality of their funerary furnishings.[16]

Contrary to some tenaciously held ideas, these burial practices have nothing to do with paganism, the state religion for the Franks being Christianity since the baptism of Clovis, doubtless in 508, just as for the subjects of the Roman

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13   Horst Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen unteren Elbe und Loire*, 2 vols (Munich, 1974).

14   Alain Dierkens and Patrick Périn, "The 5th-century Advance of the Franks in Belgica II: History and Archaeology," in *Essays on the Early Franks*, ed E. Taayke, J.H. Looijenga, O.H. Harsema and H.R. Reinders, Groningen Archaeological Studies 1 (Groningen, 2003), 165–193.

15   René Legoux, Patrick Périn and Françoise Vallet, *Chronologie normalisée du mobilier funéraire mérovingien entre Manche et Lorraine*, 3rd ed., Bulletin de liaison de l'Association française d'Archéologie mérovingienne, Special Issue (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2009). This fascicule, equally good for the whole of the right bank of the Rhine and the Frankish protectorates in the south-west of Germany, provides a representation of the majority of the object types in use in Gregory's day.

16   Patrick Périn, "Possibilités et limites de l'interprétation sociale des cimetières mérovingiens," *Antiquités nationales* 30 (1998), 169–183.

FIGURE 8.9 *Reconstructions of dress from grave furnishings: A 6th-Century Couple.*
ORIGINAL DRAWING BY P. PELLERIN

emperors since the edict of Theodosius in 380.[17] This did not exclude obviously
deviant practices (divination, magic, and witchcraft and the like), as denounced

17 Alain Dierkens and Patrick Périn, "Croyances de la Gaule mérovingienne. Du paganisme
au christianisme en Gaule: les leçons de l'histoire et de l'archéologie funéraire," *Religions
et histoire* 41 (nov.–dec., 2011), issue: "Le baptême de Clovis," coordinated by A. Dierkens
and Patrick Périn, 42–51.

by the canons of the 6th-century Gallic councils.[18] But these do not pass judgment on funerary customs in the narrow sense and in particular on the deposition of objects in graves, including those located in churches, such practices being considered by the Church as having social not religious significance, just like the decorative motives in 'Germanic animal style' that can be found on liturgical furnishings.

The material culture of the elites is known to us above all through the written sources, such as the works of Gregory of Tours and especially the poems of Fortunatus, with some archaeological exceptions: thus the famous liturgical deposit (or so-called 'treasure') of Gourdon (Saône-et-Loire), with a chalice and paten of gold-work. There are also the high-ranking burials discovered beneath the basilica of Saint-Denis, including that of Queen Aregund († ca 580), one of Chlothar I's wives and the mother of Chilperic I, which provide an idea of the luxury of the Merovingian court (Fig. 8.10). The famous treatise on diet and gastronomy, *De observatione ciborum*, composed by Anthimus, the Greek doctor of Theoderic the Great and offered through him to Theuderic I, 'king of Rheims,' attest to the sumptuousness of the cuisine of the Merovingian court, which borrowed largely from the late Roman world.[19] But Anthimus emphasizes that turnips in bacon fat constitutes the traditional dish of the Franks and affirms their good health!

8.5   Conclusion

It is clear that urban and rural archaeology with respect to 6th century Gaul allows us in a noteworthy fashion to add to the evidence of Gregory of Tours, which is not very detailed when all is said and done; the same is true of that of Fortunatus. It is in this sense that archaeology should be considered as an historical source completely separate and as a necessary supplement to the texts.

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18   Jean Gaudemet and Brigitte Basdevant, *Les canons des conciles mérovingiens* (*VIe-VIIe siècles*), 2 vols, Sources chrétiennes 353–354 (Paris, 1989).

19   Alain Dierkens et Liliane Plouvier, *Festins mérovingiens* (réalisation des recettes par Pierre Wynants et Yves Cousin), (Bruxelles 2008).

FIGURE 8.10   *Reconstructions of dress from grave furnishings: Aregund, wife of Chlotar I,*
mother of Chilperic. From the tomb found in Saint-Denis in 1959.
(ARTWORK BY FLORENT VINCENT BASED ON DOCUMENTATION BY ANTOINETTE
RAST-EICHER [TEXTILES], MARQUITA VOLKEN [LEATHER] AND PATRICK PÉRIN)

PART 4

Religious and Literary Perspectives

∵

The Works of Gregory of Tours and Patristic Tradition

Martin Heinzelmann

9.1   Introduction: Gregory Tours, Theologian

When the concept of 'theology' is defined as "giving reason to the Christian faith, speaking wholly coherently of a God to whom the Scriptures bear witness, or speaking of all things by referring them to God," then the literary opus of Gregory of Tours unavoidably deserves the qualifier 'theological.'[1] This character is essential for the design, the composition, and the subject matter of his entire work. It concerns not just the books called 'hagiographic,' or, in the case of the *Histories* alone, only certain unique elements, such as the bishop's own Faith or the few chapters obviously concerning a subject of Christian doctrine. The qualities of a theologian that Bishop Gregory must necessarily have had at his disposal has not won the attention, let alone the appreciation of writers on Gregory,

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[1]　The quotation is from the *Dictionnaire critique de théologie*, under the direction of J.-Y. Lacoste (Paris, 1998), 1140. – I owe many thanks to Walter Goffart for his translation, and to Alexander Callander Murray for his most helpful editorial interventions; remaining problems are mine.

except in respect to his writings on the saints or a few phenomena of popular religion that, almost alone, have garnered the attention of commentaries.[2] This situation plainly contrasts with the evidence of Venantius Fortunatus, a familiar of Gregory, who, at the time of the latter's ordination, presented the new dignitary to his listeners at Tours as being virtually a spiritual equal to masters of patristic theology, such as Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea, and Caesarius of Arles (*Carm.* 5.3, lines 37–40). At a later date, Fortunatus expressed this hope in regard to Gregory, by supposing that he might reanimate Gregory of Nazianzus by his *dogma* (*Carm.* 9.6, lines 5–6). Another contemporary, King Chilperic, after having himself drawn up an *indiculus* about the Trinity, addressed Gregory as "you and the other teachers of the churches."[3] Nearer to our time, in 1699 the Benedictine Dom Ruinart, an eminent theological expert and the first critical editor of Gregory's works, characterized the theological content of Gregory's writings as being perfectly suitable for strengthening the Catholic faith – "ad confirmandam fidem nostram"– citing as proof of their quality, among other things, their insertion in the canonical collection of Saint Maur, drafted under Charlemagne, which associates several chapters drawn from the *Histories* with the Creed, the texts of the councils, and the letters of the popes.[4]

When presenting himself as being constantly occupied with the teachings of the Church – "nobis in eclesiasticum dogma versantibus*"* (*VM* 2.19) – Gregory does not at all speak of his theological training and cites rarely or not at all the theologians who may have influenced him, such as, among others, Hilary, Jerome, Augustine, or Tyconius. He acknowledges only certain authors whose works he has directly drawn upon, such as Eusebius-Rufinus, Sulpicius Severus, Jerome as chronicler, and Orosius.[5] To this list of acknowledged authorities also belong a series of Christian poets, such as Lactantius, Prudentius, Sedulius, Iuvencus, Paulinus (of Nola), Avitus (of Vienne), and Venantius Fortunatus. The poetical works of Fortunatus constitute for Gregory the best way to convey

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2 See Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* (Cambridge, 2001; trans. from the original German edition, Darmstadt, 1994), 153–159 (German ed., 136–146).

3 "tu vel reliqui doctores eclesiarum" (*Hist.* 5.44).

4 Ruinart: PL 71.51–2, no. 59. And see, Pascale Bourgain and Martin Heinzelmann, "L'œuvre de Grégoire de Tours: la diffusion des manuscrits," *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois: actes du congrès international, Tours, 3–5 novembre 1994* (Tours 1997), 292.

5 In *Hist.* 5.44, in front of King Chilperic, Gregory appeals to the arguments of such *doctores ecclesiae* as Hilary and Eusebius (of Vercelli) in order to refute the king's Trinitarian theology.

Christian doctrine.[6] As concerns his own training, the bishop regretted the lack of grammatical studies and secular authors, for he was fully preoccupied by the study of the *scripta ecclesiastica* that his master Avitus, archdeacon and then bishop of Clermont (Auvergne) from 571, urged upon him (*VP* 2, prol.). His earliest education with his great-uncle Nicetius (before he became bishop of Lyons in 551/2) did not extend beyond a knowledge of the Psalms (*VP* 8.2). Gregory does not speak of his school manuals, except perhaps for the 'Christianized' edition of the seven liberal arts of Martianus Capella, an author whom he familiarly calls *Martianus noster* (*Hist*.10.31). Nevertheless, his interest in Christian institutions and expressions of its cult is clearly exemplified by his edition of a work of Sidonius Apollinaris on the masses, of which no trace survives; Gregory contributed a preface to this edition (*Hist*. 2.22). As concerns his *Treatise on the Psalms* (*PT*), a thorough study of Gregory's citations of the Psalms allows one definitively "to perceive a deliberate work of Psalm exegesis" on his part, involving at the same time the simultaneous use of witnesses to all the traditions of the Old Latin psalter.[7] In fact, Gregory's writing is in all respects profoundly and wholly conceived with reference to God or, as his own words say in the introduction to the first book of the *Histories*, where he speaks of views on the end of the world: "As for our *end,* that is Christ himself, who with generous benevolence will give us eternal life, if we have converted to him."[8] This *fines*, finality, meaning at the same time 'end' or 'purpose,' at once literary and spiritual, moral and eschatological, allows us to grasp the interaction of Gregory's writing and an omnipresent theological design.

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6   Marc Reydellet, in his edition of Fortunatus, notes that the poem *Pro libro praestito* addressed to Gregory (*Carm*. 5.8b, 35–6, commentary, 173, n. 107) and the lines "Carmina diva legens proprioque e pectore condens, / participans aliis fit tibi palma, parens" refer to an anthology of the Christian poets compiled by Gregory and lent to Fortunatus. The poets represented in it were no doubt those whom Gregory often mentions (see the text above). For their use, see Martin Heinzelmann, "La réécriture hagiographique dans l'œuvre de Grégoire de Tours," in *La réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval. Transformations formelles et idéologiques,* eds. M. Goullet and M. Heinzelmann, Beihefte der Francia 58, (Stuttgart, 2003), 15–70.

7   See Martin Heinzelmann, "Le Psautier de Grégoire de Tours," *Retour aux sources. Textes, études et documents d'histoire médiévale offerts à Michel Parisse* (Paris 2004), 785–6.

8   "Noster vero finis ipse Christus est, qui nobis vitam aeternam si ad eum conversi fuerimus larga benignitate praestabit", *Hist*. 1, prol., 5. See Martin Heinzelmann, "Structures typologiques de l'histoire d'après les Histoires de Grégoire de Tours: prophéties – accomplissement – renouvellement," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 92 (2004), 574 (and n. 18), referring to the end of the *City of God* 22.30, in which Augustine plays in the same

9.2 The Design of the Entire Corpus: Eusebius and Augustine's City of God as Models

Gregory's corpus in twenty books, known from his own inventory, placed at the conclusion of his *Histories* (10.31) as a kind of 'spiritual testament,' is a late composition, whose definitive drafting and ordering were probably interrupted by the author's death on 17 November 594, even before an edition of the corpus was completed.[9] One should therefore take seriously the wishes that the author expressed in this final chapter of the *Histories*, which lists about twenty books from his pen, whose spiritual unity and integrity he passionately conjures up. Certain of his works are in fact not included in this twenty-book ensemble.[10] The model of such a composition in two times ten books corresponds very likely to the conception that the Latin west had in the 5th and 6th centuries of the work of Eusebius of Caesarea and the ten-book *Ecclesiastical History*, as expressed in the introductory sentence of the *Gesta sancti Silvestri*, a renowned work known to Gregory (*Hist.* 2.31):

> When our historiographer Eusebius, bishop of the Palestinian city of Caesarea, wrote the *Ecclesiastical History*, he left aside what one finds in

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way on the sense of the word *finis* (end and purpose), as in his *Enarratio in psalmos*, Ps. 56:2, corresponding to Gregory's *PT*, 424; see also Martin Heinzelmann, "Heresy in Books I and II of Gregory of Tours' 'Historiae,'" in *After Rome's Fall. Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to W. Goffart,* (ed.) Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto 1997), 79, with reference to *CD* 18.54.

9   On this subject, see my book on the entire Gregorian corpus, in preparation. For the *Histories*, the excellent recent analysis of Alexander Callander Murray has shown that the arguments advocating a "synchronic or graduated composition" are untenable ("Chronology and the Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.1 [2008], 157–196); cf. ch. 3, above. In addition, an examination of the manuscripts of the *Histories* plausibly suggests that there was no unique archetype of a tradition that is constituted of very divergent families of manuscripts; see the contribution of Pascale Bourgain to this volume and my review of the book of K.P. Hilchenbach in *Francia-Recensio* 2010/1 Mittelalter – Moyen Âge. Out of the ten hagiographic books, the two first books of the *VM* were accessible to the public in Gregory's lifetime, and this may also have been the case with the *PT*. For the spiritual testament, in addition to *Hist.* 10.31, see Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 15–23.

10   The works not included in this inventory are the *Passion of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus* (the adaptation of a Greek text) and the *Miracles of St Andrew* (the rewriting of a Latin text); but also his edition of the masses of Sidonius Apollinaris and the extracts of

his other works or what he recalls having already dealt with. For he filled twenty books, that is, two decades, with passions of martyrs, bishops, confessors, holy virgins and women, from almost all the provinces.[11]

The relationship of Gregory's work with Eusebius' *HE* (Gregory consulted it in the translation of Rufinus without mentioning him by name) extends beyond the ostensible correspondence of the number of twenty books in two decades with Gregory's two series of ten books – one historiographic and the other 'hagiographic.'[12] Gregory's relationship to Eusebius extends also to a concept of ecclesiastical history that presents itself in the form of a collection, or a continuous series, of passions of martyrs and accounts of confessors or other saints.[13] A final relationship concerns the role that Eusebius as first historiographer attributes to the person of Christ, who is the Logos-Word of God, and to His intervention in history conceived of as a history of salvation; it is on this pathway that, "since Creation, God's plan fulfills itself first in theophanies of the Logos."[14] From this perspective, both Eusebius

Christian poetry. See MGH SRM 1.2 *Miracula et opera minora*, and for the extracts of poetry, above n. 6.

11   "Historiographus noster Eusebius Caesariae Palestinae urbis episcopus cum historiam ecclesiasticam scriberet, pretermisit ea: quae in aliis opusculis sunt: vel quae se meminit retulisse: Nam *viginti libros* idest *duas decades* omnium pene provinciarum passiones martyrum et episcoporum et confessorum et sacrarum virginum ac mulierum continere fecit," *Gesta Silvestri papae*, prol. (*BHL* 7725, (ed.) Mombritius). The idea of a Eusebius collecting the whole of the acts of the martyrs is found in the two 5th-6th-century apocryphal letters, of Jerome and of Bishops Chromatius and Heliodorus, accompanying the Hieronymian Martyrology; see Martin Heinzelmann, "L'hagiographie au service de l'histoire: l'évolution du 'genre' et le rôle de l'hagiographie sérielle," in *Des saints et des rois: L'hagiographie au service de l'histoire*, (eds.) Françoise Laurent, Laurence Mathey-Maille and Michelle Szkilnik (Paris, 2014), 23–44. For Eusebius, see F. Richard, introduction to *Histoire ecclésiastique*, trans. G. Bardy (Paris 2003), 9–34.

12   In my book of 1994, I did not realize Gregory's dependence on the Eusebian model. Gregory's quotations seemed to point rather to Orosius, who, by beginning with Creation, is closer to the *Histories* as concerns the beginnings of history. See Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 104–107 (German ed., 93–96).

13   The title "historia ecclesiastica" is also found in several manuscripts of the *Histories*, including one of 700 (B5) and the famous Montecassino 275 of the 11th c. (A1); see Martin Heinzelmann, "Structures typologiques de l'histoire d'après les Histoires de Grégoire de Tours: prophéties – accomplissement – renouvellement," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 92 (2004), 571 n. 5.

14   François Bovon, "L'Histoire Ecclésiastique d'Eusèbe de Césarée et l'histoire du salut," in *Oikonomia. Heilsgeschichte als Thema der Theologie*, (ed.) F. Christ (Hambourg 1967), 130.

and Gregory share the same concern to refer to the manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament, before the Incarnation. Eusebius illustrates this design with the example of Abraham to whom Christ appears (John 8:56), of Moses (Gen. 19:24), of Jacob struggling with the Lord (Gen. 32:29),[15] but also with the help of the testimony of Solomon (Prov. 8:12,15,16), of Isaiah (Isa. 61:1), of Daniel (Dan. 7:9–10), and of the psalmist (Ps. 44:7–8).[16] On an identical plan, Gregory speaks of Abraham's vision of Christ (*Hist.* 1.7) and then presents Joseph and Zerubbabel as 'types' of Christ.[17] He makes the attestations of the Triune God in the Old Testament the main subject of the prologue to *Hist.* 3, then too in the first chapter of *VJ,* and in his own argument with an Arian heretic (*Hist.* 5.43, p.252, line 6); and, further, he treats it as a primordial subject in the *diapsalmata* of the treatise *PT.*[18] But with this model of an 'historical Christ' – still a sketchy model in Eusebius – and with some rare citations by him, as chronicler or historiographer, the debt of Gregory to Eusebius comes to an end.[19]

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15   In *Hist.* 1.9 Jacob combats an angel ("angelicam luctam"), not the Lord, but in *Hist.* 5.43, 252, Jacob is cited with Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon as a witness to the Triune God.

16   See *HE* 1.2, title: "Summary extract on the preexistence and the divinity of our savior and lord, the Christ of God"; and *HE* 1.3, title: "The names of Jesus and of Christ were formerly known and honored by the divine prophets." *HE* trans. after Bardy, 42f., 50f.

17   *Hist.* 1.9, 10 line 11 ("tipum praeferens Redemptoris"); *Hist.* 1.15, 15 line 6 ("Zorobabil id est Christus"); and for other examples, see Martin Heinzelmann, "Heresy," 77.

18   *Diapsalmata* are concise sentences that provide meaning for each psalm based on verses of the psalm in question. Each sentence begins "psalmus ostendit." On the *diapsalmata,* or *diapsalmae* in Gregory's *PT,* 425 ("Diapsalmae vero quae 'semper' interpraetantur docent ut anima semper in his exerceatur fidelis intentio"), see Martin Heinzelmann, "Die Psalmen bei Gregor von Tours," *Präsenz und Verwendung der Heiligen Schrift im christlichen Frühmittelalter: exegetische Literatur und liturgische Texte,* (ed.) P. Carmassi (Wiesbaden, 2008), p. 40. The first part of *PT* (diaps. 1–89) is edited by Krusch, 425–427, following the oldest, fragmentary manuscript (early 9th century), for the lacking *diapsalmata* 90–150 I follow Dom Pierre Salmon, *Les 'tituli psalmorum' des manuscrits latins,* Études liturgiques 3, (Paris, 1959), 138–148.

19   Citations of the historiographer (each time in fact concerning Rufinus' translation): *Hist.* 9.15, 430 line 4 ("historiograffus Eusebius"); *GC* 50 ("Caesariensis Eusebius"); *VP* 6.1 ("Eusebi historia"). The chronicler Eusebius: *Hist.* 1, praef.; *Hist.* 1.36 ("historiographus in chronicis scribit Eusebius"); *Hist.* 2, prol. Gregory never refers to an 'ecclesiastical history.'

A much greater debt is owed to an author who nevertheless is mentioned nowhere in Gregory's work: Augustine, author of the *City of God*.[20] The subject of this monumental work is how society, both spiritual and historical at the same time, embraces all men, not only those of a single empire or kingdom. This society, in Augustine's view, mingles in its historical condition two types or 'societies' of men, some that live "according to human kind," the others "according to God"; both *genera hominum* constitute the city of God (*civitas Dei*), or Church (*ecclesia*), or even society of saints (*societas sanctorum*)*,* until their final separation by the Judgment and a definitive constitution of the *societas sanctorum*.[21] Too often, the attribute of the CD as a genuinely historical work is not recognized; as such, it has the classical layout: *exortus* (Books 11–14), *excursus* (Books 15–18) and *fines* (Books 19–22). This structure has a counterpart in Gregory's *Histories*: in Book 1, an origin of the Church built on the model of Augustine's *civitas Dei* (Book 11), and, framing the *excursus*, the eschatological ending in Book 10.[22] Let me draw attention to certain important passages illustrating the parallelism of the two works at the beginning of the *Histories*:[23]

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20   Henceforth CD*,* cited after *Œuvres de saint Augustin*, 5th series, *La Cité de Dieu*, vols 33–37 (text of the 4th edition by B. Dombaert and A. Kalb, introduction and notes by G. Bardy, trans. G. Combès), Bibliothèque Augustinienne, 1959–60. For Saint Augustine and Gregory, see Martin Heinzelmann, "'Adel' und Societas sanctorum: Soziale Ordnungen und christliches Weltbild von Augustinus bis zu Gregor von Tours," in *Nobilitas*: *Funktion und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa*, (eds.) O.G. Oexle und W. Paravicini (Göttingen 1997), 224–234; Heinzelmann, "Structures," 569–96; Giselle De Nie, "The Language in Miracle – The Miracle in Language: Words and the Word according to Gregory of Tours," in idem, *Word, Image and Experience*: *Dynamics of Miracle and Self-Perception in Sixth-Century Gaul,* Variorum Collected Studies (Aldershot, 2003): no. 17, 97–114 (orig. prt. 1995).

21   CD 15:1, vol. 36: 34, "ipsius generis humani, quod in duo genera distribuimus, unum eorum, qui secundum hominem, alterum eorum, qui secundum Deum vivunt; quas etiam mystice appellamus civitates duas, hoc est duas societates hominum, quarum est una quae praedestinata est in aeternum regnare cum Deo, altera aeternum supplicium subire cum diabolo." For the terminology *ecclesia, societas sanctorum, civitas Dei*, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 160–72 (German ed., 141–150), and the note "28. The Church and the City of God" in *Œuvres de saint Augustin*, vol. 37: 774–777; for the fundamental difference of the CD or Church, 'in time' and after the Last Judgement, see Heinzelmann, "Adel," 225–226 with reference to the essential work of Pasquale Borgomeo.

22   See Heinzelmann, *Gregory/Gregor*.

23   Italics have been added for emphasis. The sequence of passages follows that of the CD.

AUGUSTINE, *CITY OF GOD*	GREGORY, *HISTORIES*
[The Two Cities and the City of God]	[Creation and the Beginning of Two Types of Man]
11.1: I will undertake to examine the origin, development, and deserved ends of the two cities, namely the earthly one and the heavenly one, which, as I said, are in this world for a time entangled and mingled with one another [de duarum civitatum, terrenae scilicet et caelestis, quas in hoc interim saeculo *perplexas* quodam modo diximus *invicemque permixtas*]	2 prol.: I relate in their tangled and mingled fashion the miracles of the saints and the slaughters of the people. For I think it will not be thought unreasonable if I recount the happy life of the saints [that is the heavenly city] in the midst of that of the destruction of the unfortunate [that is the earthly city] [*mixte confusequae* tam virtutes sanctorum quam strages gentium memoramus. Non enim inrationabiliter accipi puto, se filicem beatorum vitam inter miserorum memoremus excidia]
11.32: In the beginning God created heaven and the earth, and his phrase 'in the beginning' does not mean that he did that first...but means that he made everything by his wisdom, that is his Word, called by Scripture the 'beginning,' as He himself so declares in Scripture when...he answers, "I am the beginning" (John 8:25) [In *principio* fecit Deus caelum et terram ; atque illud quod dictum est In *principio*, non ita dictum tamquam primum hoc factum sit... sed quia omnia in sapientia fecit, quod est *Verbum* eius et ipsum scriptura *principium* nominavit (sicut ipse in evangelio... respondit se esse *principium*)]	1.1: In the beginning God, in the form of his Christ, who is the beginning and foundation of all, that is to say in the form of his Son, made heaven and the earth. After the creation of all the elements of the world, He...shaped a man in his image and likeness [*Principio Dominus caelum terramque in Christo suo, qui est omnium principium,*[24] id est in Filio suo, furmavit, qui post creata mundi totius elementa...hominem ad suam imaginem similitudinemque plasmavit*]*[25]

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24   The nominative *principium* is found only this one time in the *Histories*; it echoes John's Apocalypse 1:8 ("Ego sum alpha et omega, *principium et finis*, dicit Dominus Deus") and follows the stress on *finis* in the prologue immediately preceding this first chapter. In all, there are eleven occurrences of (*in/a*) *principio* all referring to the origin that is Christ principle in Creation. See later for further details. For 'beginning,' Gregory most often puts *initium* (31 occurrences), *exordium* (12 occurrences), or *primordium* (4 occurrences); see especially *Hist.* 1.1, with "exordio mundi" (p. 3, line 17), "initio mundi" (p. 5, line 14), and "ab ipso Adam sumamus exordium" (line 18–19). See Heinzelmann, "Structures," 580 n. 41.

25   Cf. also the prologue of *GM*: "Unde Iohannis euangelista exorsus est, dicens: *In principio* erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat *in principio* apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil."

AUGUSTINE, *CITY OF GOD*	GREGORY, *HISTORIES*
12.28: In this first man created at the beginning…we judge that two societies, like cities, have sprung up within the human race [in hoc (primo) homine, qui primitus factus est…exortas fuisse existimemus in genere humano societates tamquam *civitates duas…*]	1.1: This first man, Adam, before he sinned, represented a 'type' of the Lord and Saviour. Indeed, as He lay in the sleep of the passion… He produced from himself the immaculate virgin, which is the Church. [hic primus homo Adam, antequam peccaret, tipum Redemptoris domini praetulisset. Ipse enim in passionis sopore obdormiens…virginem inmaculatamque *eclesiam* sibi exhibuit][26]
15.1: Cain was the first born of the two parents of the human race: he is part of the city of men [the beginning of the earthly city]; Abel, born second, belongs to the city of God [Natus est igitur prior Cain ex illis duobus generis humani parentibus, pertinens ad hominum civitatem, posterior Abel, ad civitatem Dei]	1.2: Cain and Abel [=chapter title] … While God received favourably the sacrifice of one of them…the other became the first parricide… 1.3: From then on the entire human race fell into accursed crime [beginning of the earthly city] [...dum Deus unius sacrificium dignanter suscipit, alius…novus parecida consurgens…[1.3] Exhinc cunctum genus in facinus exsecrabile ruit…]
[16.3; 16:35, etc.: representatives of the earthly church, including Chus, Nebroth, Esau, and many others]	[beginning of the 'mixed Church'[27] of which Chus (1.5), Nebroth (1.6), Esau (1.8) are representatives]
[Representatives of the city of God]	[Representatives of the immaculate Church before the Incarnation]
15.19, *Breviculus*: The signification of Enoch's translation [his final abduction, without dying, signifies Christ][28]	1.3: Enoch iustus

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26   For this typology of the Church, see below, and Heinzelmann, "Structures," 579–80.

27   Heinzelmann, "Structures," 585. One observes that Gregory, unlike Augustine, has the immaculate Church/City of God start with Adam as a type of Christ. This typology, referring to the perfect imitation of Christ's person by the just and the saints, will later be essential.

28   The *breviculus*, preceeding each book of the cd, gives a summary of all chapters, generally in one sentence.

AUGUSTINE, *CITY OF GOD*	GREGORY, *HISTORIES*
15.26, *Breviculus*: How the ark that Noah was ordered to build signifies in all its details Christ and the Church [Quod arca, quam Noe iussus est facere, in omnibus Christum ecclesiamque significet]	1.4: Noah, most faithful and special to the Lord, and representing a 'type' of the Lord...; the form of the ark represented a 'type' of the mother church [Noe fidelissimum ac peculiarem sibi suique tipus speciem [scil. *Domini*] praeferentem...; species illa arcae tipum matris gessisset aeclesiae]
16.29, *Breviculus*: The three men or angels in the person of whom the Lord... appeared to Abraham at the oak of Mamre [De tribus viris vel angelis, in quibus ad quercum Mambre apparuisse Abrahae Dominus indicatur]	1.7: Abraham...to whom our Lord Christ showed himself [Abraham...huic se Christus dominus noster...monstravit]
16.39: Iacob whose name is also Israel... is plainly a figure of Christ. The victory of Jacob over the angel is the symbol of the passion of Christ. [Iacob autem etiam Israel...typum Christi evidentissime gerens. Nam quod ei praevaluit Jacob... significat passionem Christi]	1.9: Jacob, the beloved of God. [Iacob dilectus Dei]
16.42: As was the case for the two sons of Isaac, namely Esau and Jacob...so of the two sons of Joseph, the eldest represented the Jewish people and the younger Christians [Sicut autem duo Isaac filii Esau et Iacob...ita factum est etiam in duobus filiis Ioseph; nam maior gessit typum Iudaeorum, Christianorum autem minor]	1.9: Joseph...prefigures the Saviour [Ioseph...tipum praeferens Redemptoris]
17.8: In Solomon is established the image of a future thing...because he reigned in peace as his name (*pacificus* in Latin) indicates... He announced Christ the Lord [Facta est quidem nonnulla imago rei futurae etiam in Salomone, in eo quod...pacem habuit secundum nomen suum (Salomon quippe *pacificus* est Latine)...praenuntiabat etiam ipse Christum Dominum]	1.13: The Lord appeared to [Solomon]; *and PT*, 424: Psalm to Solomon, that is *pacificus*, which belongs to Christ, who is our peace. [...apparuit ei (Salamon) Dominus. *PT*, 424: "Psalmus in Salamonem, id est *pacificum* quod est in Christo, qui est pax nostra."]

AUGUSTINE, *CITY OF GOD*	GREGORY, *HISTORIES*
[No parallel]	1.15: Zerubbabel, that is Christ [the figure is according to the *Chronicle* of Jerome] [Zorobabil, id est Christus]
18.2, *Breviculus:* Of the kings and epochs of the earthly city, to which correspond the epochs of the saints, counted from the beginnings of Abraham [De terrenae civitatis regibus atque temporibus, quibus ab exortu Abrahae sanctorum tempora supputata conveniunt (see 18.2-27 for this series)]	1.17: The various kingdoms of the nations [according to *Chronicle* of Jerome and beginning in the time of Abraham, with the Assyrian king Ninus and the Sicyonian Europs, as in Augustine] [De diversis gentium regnis]
18.46: [Jesus] did many miracles that he might reveal that He was God. The Gospels report as many of these as are sufficient to make Him known. [Qui ut in se commendaret Deum, miracula multa fecit, ex quibus quaedam, quantum ad eum praedicandum satis esse visum est, scriptura evangelica continet]	1.20: While our Lord God Jesus Christ performed prodigies and miracles among the peoples...and while he worked still other miracles, he revealed clearly to the peoples that he was their God. [Domino autem Deo nostro Iesu Christo...prodigia et signa per populos operante...dum alia multa signa faciens manefestissime se Deum populis esse declarat]

With the advent of Christ and the Church, Augustine completes his historical survey of the two cities, overstepping this chronological frame only with a chapter on heresies (*CD* 18.51 – cf. *Hist*. 1.28 "About Hadrian and the malicious contrivances of the heretics...") and another on the persecutions by the emperors.[29] In addition to many general questions concerning death and the conditions of resurrection, the last four books (*fines*: *CD* 19–22) discuss the 'reign of the saints' for a thousand years according to the Apocalypse (Apoc. 20:1–6,), the judgment of God, the role of miracles, and the eschatological ends of the two cities, transformed into the Church. Gregory, for his part, in his last book, introduces an eschatological set of themes based on certain prophecies announcing the end of the world, signified by plagues, earthquakes, solar

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29 *CD* 18.52, and n. 56 in vol. 36: 770–2 (as above, in n. 20) – the ten persecutions. Gregory speaks of the persecutions of Nero (1.25), Domitian (1.26), Trajan (1.27), Hadrian (1.28), Decius (1.30), Valerian and Gallienus (1.32), Diocletian (1.35), Valens (1.41), Maximus (1.43).

eclipses, appearances of Antichrist, but also by great saints calling to mind the imminence of the Final Judgment. Among other issues, the Final Judgment aroused controversies concerning the fate of the body at the resurrection. Gregory responds to the many arguments that put in doubt the possibility of resurrection of the flesh, arguing in the same manner as Augustine in the last books of the *CD*.[30] As for the role of saints and of miracles, of which Augustine speaks at length in this eschatological part of the *CD*, Gregory makes them essential elements of the design of his corpus; we will return to them in the later chapters of this article. Similarly, one will also have to speak of the device of antithesis deployed by Augustine, the almost systematic use of which by Gregory may seem excessive to certain readers.[31]

In one respect, however, Gregory shows himself explicitly opposed to his predecessor without directly naming him, that is, when, at the end of his work, Augustine speaks of the ages or eras of man, which he identifies with the six days of Creation followed by a seventh "which will be our Sabbath and…will be the day of the Lord…consecrated by the Resurrection of Christ."[32] On this subject, Gregory pronounces himself in a chapter devoted exclusively to the meaning of Sunday, saying: "We believe that Sunday, the day of the Resurrection, was the first day of the week and not the seventh, *as many think*. This is the day of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we rightly call the Lord's day after his holy Resurrection."[33]

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30   Heinzelmann, *Gregory,* 76–87 (German. ed., 69–78). For Augustine, see *CD* 22.5, entitled "Concerning the resurrection of the flesh, which some do not believe even though the whole world believes it," and *CD* 22.19–20, summarized by the *Breviculus*: "None of the bodily defects that in this life diminish a man's beauty will any longer exist at the resurrection"; and "That the nature of bodies…will be restored in its full integrity at the resurrection." Corresponding to these is Gregory, *Hist.* 10.13: "Controversy on the subject of the resurrection" (see below 9.5.5, p. 324).

31   *CD* 11.18, *Breviculus*, "On the beauty of the universe which, in the order given by God, is better revealed by the opposition of contraries." And see Heinzelmann, *Gregory,* 147–52 (German ed., 131–138).

32   *CD* 22.30; see already *CD* 11.31. The six world eras to the Incarnation, are followed by a seventh corresponding to current time, according to Augustine. Gregory does not accept this design.

33   *Hist.* 1.23, 18, "Dominicam vero resurrectionem die prima facta credimus, non septimam, *sicut multi putant*. Hic est dies resurrectionis domini nostri Iesu Christi, quem nos propriae dominicum pro sancta eius resurrectione vocamus." Italics added. Gregory returns to this same subject at the end of the work, *Hist.* 10.30, with an identical remark.

9.3   Christology 1: The 'Mixed' Church and the Writing of History

The first book of the *Histories* has a very different role from the other books. It functions as a model for all the books that follow, but also outlines a history that, at the same time, is of events and of the spirit. Further, this first book constitutes a model for the presentation through examples of the actors of this history, who are Christ and the *sancti* and *miseri* of His Church. It is a model too for the rules that will determine the mutual, typological relationships between history transmitted and fashioned by Holy Scriptures and the events of our present time (see further my Conclusion). In addition to the prologues of the first three books and the last chapter of Book 10, which is a sort of spiritual 'testament' of Gregory (*Hist.* 10.31), we must inevitably decipher this first book if we wish to draw close to Gregory's historico-theological and typological thinking.

   The bishop's personal confession of faith in the preface of the first book of the *Histories* is what highlights the role of Christ; by the formula, "I believe that Christ is that Word of the Father by whom all things were made ('credo Christum hunc verbum esse patris, per quem facta sunt omnia')," it furnishes a considerable supplement to the old Roman Credo.[34] In this same prologue, the author reaches the culminating point of a Christ representing quite simply the goal (*finis*) for him and his writing, before he begins in the first chapter (*Hist.* 1.1) to speak of Creation by God's Word, which is the Son or yet *principium*, that is to say, beginning as well as foundation: "In the beginning God, in the form of his Christ, who is the beginning and foundation of all, that is to say in the form of his Son, made heaven and the earth. After the creation of all the elements of the world, He...shaped a man in his image and likeness."[35] This account draws away from the idea of a God-Father creator of the world, by combining the beginning of Genesis (Gen 1:1) with the beginning of the Gospel of John (John 1:1), thus identifying the Word, Son of God in the Evangelist, with the *principium* of Genesis.[36] Following this patristic interpretation, Gregory emphasized the

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34   For Gregory's confession of faith, see below 9.5.1.

35   *Hist.* 1.1: "Principio Dominus caelum terramque in Christo suo, qui est omnium principium, id est in Filio suo, furmavit, qui post creata mundi totius elementa...hominem ad suam imaginem similitudinemque plasmavit."

36   Thomas O'Loughlin, *Teachers and Code-Breakers : The Latin Genesis Tradition, 430–800* (Turnhout 1998), and esp. 204–5; Heinzelmann, "Structures," 575–578; and J.C. Salzmann, "Per quem omnia facta sunt: Schriftauslegung zu einem theologischen Satz," *Studia patristica* 34 (2001), 541–51. See n. 25 above for the term *principium* in Gregory's work. See also the sermon of Quodvultdeus of Carthage, *De Cantico novo*, cap. 7, PL 40:684, "fuit

idea of the Son, Word of the Father, being creator of all things, by use of the terms *principium* and *finis* for Christ in the prologue preceding this first chapter, taking into account the words of the Apocalypse (Apoc. 1:8 and 22:13), in which the Lord says of Himself, "ego sum A et Ω, principium et finis." At the beginning of the historical part of *CD*, Augustine too had called special attention to a Christ being Wisdom and Word of the Father by whom "facta sunt omnia."³⁷

The evidence for this interpretation, abounding in implications for our author's design, appears throughout his work. But, above all, one must stress the reference to John 1:1–3 in the prologue to the first book of the second 'decade,' the *De gloria martyrum*: "In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil."³⁸ This is clearly a counterpart to the citation in the prologue and the first chapter of the first book of the first 'decade' of historical books. Consequently Christ as principal agent at the start of Genesis and as Creator of everything – or as *fundator ecclesiae* and *Dominus utriusque conditor Testamenti* (founder of the Church and of the two Testaments) – is often celebrated, specially in the 'hagiographic' books.³⁹

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aliquod tempus quando Pater fuit sine Verbo, aut fuit aliquod principium ante ipsum principium, quoniam ipse Filius dixit se esse principium? Interrogantibus quippe Judaeis, Tu quis es? respondit, Principium. Ergo et illud quod in Genesi scriptum est, In principio fecit Deus caelum et terram, intelligitur in Filio, qui est principium." Knowledge of Quodvultdeus by Gregory has been suggested by P. Bourgain and M. Heinzelmann, "Courbe-toi, fier Sicambre, adore ce que tu as brûlé. À propos de Grégoire de Tours, *Hist.* 2.31," *Bibliothèque de l'École de chartes*, 154 (1996), 591–606, here 602–3.

37   *CD* 11.9; as for the *sapientia Patris* (1 Cor. 1:21–23), see Gregory's *diaps.* 48, 426, "(psalmus ostendit) quod ipse (scil. Christus) sit sapientia Patris, quae prophetae locuntur." For Gregory's *diapsalmata*, beginning all by "psalmus ostendit," and where "ipse" always signifies Christ, see above, n. 18.

38   *GM* prol., 38: "In the beginning was the the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was with God in the beginning. Everything was created through him, and without him nothing was created." Next follows John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh and lived among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the only-begotten by the Father, filled with grace and truth (Et Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis, et vidimus gloriam eius, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratia et veritate)." Gregory also employed the two citations in his discussion with the Arian Aquila (*Hist.* 5.43, 250 line 19–21).

39   *VP* 8, 240 : "Dominus utriusque conditor Testamenti"; *VP* 18, prol., 283: "Legiferi vatis oraculum, cum de principio principium fandi sumpsisset…" (the book of Moses makes the beginning of all things the beginning of his discourse); *PT diaps.* 17, 426: "quod ipse [scil.

In the exegesis of Ps. 50:12–14 in the prologue to Book 3 of the *Histories*, Gregory even goes counter to a part of exegetical tradition when, speaking of the Trinity, he identifies the three spirits of the Psalm, *spiritus rectus, sanctus, principalis*, and attributes the 'principal' to the Son, and not to the Father:

> [I pass over]…how David prophesied [the Trinity] in a psalm, praying that he be renewed by the *spiritus rectus*, that the Holy Spirit (*spiritus sanctus*) not be removed from him, and that he be strengthened by the *spiritus principalis*. I see here a deep meaning: the spirit whom the heretics allege to be lesser, the voice of the prophet proclaims *principalis.*[40]

When, at the beginning of his work, Gregory insists on presenting Christ in such an intense way, he is in agreement with patristic tradition, for which the person of Christ constitutes the starting point for every typological reading. Now, it is precisely this Christ who, in the first chapter of Gregory's historiography, undertakes the creation of Adam, who represents the type of Christ, then Eve, creating the alliance that Gregory calls the immaculate Church.[41]

> As Adam slept, a rib was taken from him, and the woman Eve was created. There is no doubt that, before he sinned, this first man Adam represented the type of the Lord and Saviour. When Christ lapsed into the sleep of his passion, pouring forth water and blood from His side, He produced from

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Christus] fundator sit ecclesiae et eam a temptationibus multis eripiat," et ibid. 39, 426: "quod ipse in capite testamenti veteris sit scriptus"; *VP* 15.3, 273: "Domine Iesu Christe, qui in principio cuncta mundi elementa creasti"; *CS* 11, 410: "…ut cognoscat homo, ab illo se accipere victum, qui eum creavit ex nihilo" (miracle of the harvests); and especially the *diapsalmata* of Gregory's *PT* – Ps. 32, 426: "Quod in ipso [scil. Christus] qui est verbum Patris, caeli virtutesque eorum fundati sunt"; Ps. 73, 427: "Quod ipse creaverit cuncta aelementa quae cernimus"; Ps. 99, (ed.) Salmon, 144: "quod ab ipso facti, ipsi debeamus iubilare servire et psallere"; Ps. 146, (ed.) Salmon, 148: "quod ipse stellarum quas ipse prius defixit et numerum noverit et nomina"; Ps. 148, (ed.) Salmon, 148: "quod ipsius iussu cuncta vel facta sint vel creata."

40   *Hist.* 3, prol., 96. See Heinzelmann, "Psautier" (above, n. 7), 779 n. 44, and idem, "Structures," 577 n. 32. For other interpretations, see Augustine, who speaks of them in *Ennarrationes in Psalmos*, 50:17, CCSL 38:612.

41   For the typologies that follow, see Heinzelmann, "Structures," 579–584.

Himself the virgin and immaculate Church, redeemed by His blood and cleansed by the water, having no blemish or no wrinkle.[42]

Other typologies of this Church follow, but exclusively in this first book of the *Histories,* which constitutes a kind of spiritual guide for the understanding of the Christian mysteries. For example, when Noah, a type of the Lord, builds the Ark, the latter represents the type of mother Church saving its own.[43] The *diapsalma* for Ps. 23 (*PT*) proclaims that Christ "sets His Church, redeemed by His blood, over the waves of the world," and creates a connection between the typologies of chapters 1 (the blood and water) and 4 (Ark). Gregory recognizes another explicit typology of the Church in the crossing of the Red Sea (*Hist.* 1.10), whose "divisions" signify the various merits of the Christian and which establish him as a member of Christ's Church after baptism.[44] This is the last example of the explicit typologies of a Church that, first prefigured and proclaimed, becomes then the obligatory frame of all history, starting with the life of Christ, His Passion, and the Ascension (*Hist.* 1.16–24). Other references in the *Histories* to this present Church of Christ, as numerous as they are, will all be consequently more or less implicit.

Unlike an Augustine speaking of the two cities, earthly and heavenly, Gregory does not speak of the 'mixed' Church in the same way as about the immaculate Church, although he recognized that the history of the world before the Final Judgment consists of the structural opposition between the good and the *miseri,* the unfortunate or wretched. For him, there are only those who are in the immaculate Church and the others, who are not.[45] This scheme may have seemed more understandable to his public than the existence of two structures, two societies or cities, that in reality are only one before and after

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42   *Hist.* 1.1, 5–6: "Cuius dormienti ablata costa, mulier Ewa creata est. Nec dubium enim est, quod hic primus homo Adam, antequam peccaret, tipum Redemptoris domini praetulisset. Ipse enim in passionis sopore obdormiens, de latere suo dum aquam cruoremque producit, virginem inmaculatamque eclesiam sibi exhibuit, redemptam sanguine, latice emundatam, *non habentem maculam aut rugam*." Italics are Eph. 5:27.

43   *Hist.* 1.4, 6–7: "...non ambigo, quod species illa arcae tipum matris gessisset aeclesiae. Ipsa enim inter fluctus et scupulos huius saeculi transiens..."

44   *Hist.* 1.10, pp. 12–13: "Nec enim dubium est, quod transitus ille maris vel columna nubis tipum gesserit nostri baptismatis..."; and see Heinzelmann, "Structures," 580. The divisions after Ps. 135:13, "Qui divisit mare rubrum in divisiones."

45   See Gregory's Credo in the prologue to *Hist.* 1 (p. 4): those who deny that Christ is coeternal with the Father, "ab eclesia segregare contestor." The formula of the Nicene Creed was known to Gregory, perhaps from the Cassiodoran *Historia tripartita* (see *PL* 69:928).

the Last Judgment.[46] Nevertheless, our historian-bishop leaves no doubt that with the murder of Abel by Cain there begins a history different from that of Creation and of an Adam as a type of the Lord. In *Hist.* 1:2, not mentioning the names of the two brothers (Abel and Cain are only in the title to the chapter), he names one of them *novus parecida*, or first parricide and links him to the opening of the next chapter: "From then on the entire human race fell into accursed crime." In parallel to 'types of the Lord,' another typology is set in place – that of the *miseri,* who are members of this 'mixed' Church: Chus, the first deviser of idolatry, "primus idolatriae adinventor" (1.5); followed by the builders of Babel, meaning confusion, "hoc est confusio" (1.6), and Esau called Edom with the sense of earthly one, "qui Edom, id est terrenus" (1.8); continued in Christ's lifetime by Pilate and Herod (1.24), and then by Nero (1.25) and the series of persecutor emperors. Another series of *miseri* in history is named by a saint addressing the devil himself: "you have been driven out as Cain, supplanted as Esau, overthrown as Goliath, and hanged as the traitor Judas."[47]

Gregory's idea of a Church that we call 'mixed' by virtue of his own phrase *mixte confusaeque*, which is illustrated in Book 1 by the evidence of biblical examples, is finally laid out in a programmatic fashion in the prologues to Books 2 and 3.

The prologue of Book 2 begins:

> Following the chronological course of time, I recount in their entangled and mixed-together fashion the miracles of the saints as well as the massacres of peoples. For I think it should not be considered unreasonable to recount the happy life of the saints in the midst of the calamities of the wretched.

The dichotomy expressed in the two clauses symbolizing the opposition of Christ's immaculate Church to the representatives of the 'mixed' Church are next illustrated by the example of five more precise pairings, all taken from the four books of Kings (*historiae regum Israheliticorum*) – the first two couples are later 'actualized,' that is brought up to date, or 'fulfilled,' following typological terminology, in the prologue to Book 3, which is explicitly concerned with

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46   For Augustine's concept of the two societies, one 'in time,' the other being eternal, both making only one, see Heinzelmann, "Adel," 224–226 (with bibl.); for the synonymic usage of City, Church, *regnum Dei, societas sanctorum*, see the note "L'Église et la Cité de Dieu," in *CD*, vol. 37: 774–777.

47   *VP* 11.1 (life of the holy recluse Caluppa).

recent history, *nostra tempora*. The archetype-examples of Book 2 are the following: under the prophet Samuel the Just, the sacrilegious Phineas (the priest) perished; under (king) David, the pagan Goliath met his end; under the prophet Elias, doer of great miracles, various sufferings existed; under Ezechias, a king singled out by God, (the people of) Jerusalem had to endure injuries; under the prophet Elisha, who was able to bring even the dead back to life, the people of Israel endured great misfortunes.

The archetype-examples in the prologue of Book 3 are: Arius, *inventor* of the "iniquitous sect" of the Arians, perished miserably, while Saint Hilary, defender of the Holy Trinity, was exiled, but was able to return to his homeland and enter paradise; Clovis, confessing the Holy Trinity, was victorious and extended his kingdom over the whole of Gaul, whereas Alaric, who denied the Trinity, lost his life and, what matters more, his eternal life.[48]

Gregory undoubtedly seeks to form biblico-historical pairs having a typological significance, which is to say they indicate a concrete situation-type extending beyond the single example and its unique biblical context. He focuses on two types of persons – on the one hand kings and prophet/bishops, and, on the other, the people of God, subject to miseries of all kinds because of its many faults. The quest for significant pairings is the more evident in that the 'types' are perfectly identifiable in the current events of Gregory's work: Phineas, a second-rank biblical figure with no genuine exegetical significance, is learnedly 'adapted' for the occasion as a 'sacrilegious' figure; he *will be* the arch-heresiarch Arius, just as Samuel will be fulfilled by Saint Hilary of Poitiers, as Goliath will reappear as Alaric and "David Strong-hand" as the outstanding warrior (*egregius pugnator*) Clovis.[49] In the same way, elsewhere in Gregory's work (*Hist.* 7–9), the good king Guntram will fulfill the type of King Ezechias, just as the prophets Elias and Elisha will be fulfilled as *novus Helias* and *novus Heliseus*, in Saints Abraham (abbot of Saint Cyr) and Martin of Tours.[50]

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48   Later, Gregory links together the examples of three Arian kings of the Burgundians who also lost their lives as well as their eternal salvation, a false assertion in sectarian terms in at least two cases.

49   "David quem Fortem manu dicunt," *Hist.* 2, prol., 36 (after the *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum* of Jerome; and cf. 36 n. 1); Clovis, *Hist.* 2.12, 62: "Hic [scil. Clovis] fuit magnus et pugnatur egregius."

50   For Guntram, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory,* 51–60 (German ed., 49–57) and esp. n. 32 (German ed. 196f. n. 32) for the parallelism Guntram-Ezechias. *VP* 3 (*Vita Abrahae abbatis*) 1, 223: "quasi *novus* Helias"; *VM* 2.43, 174, "proferamus *novum* Heliseum saeculo nostro, qui cadaver defuncti vivum remisit a monumento"; *VM* 3.22, 188, "[Martin] Israel nostri temporis." The fact of having resurrected dead persons gives Gregory the occasion for

The succession of chapters alternating *mixte confusaeque* 'hagiographic' and extremely profane subjects expresses fully the mixed character of Christ's Church before the Final Judgment. Later centuries would have the impression that the Frankish kingdom was the proper subject of a work wrongly called *Historia Francorum*.[51] In Gregorian terms, the Frankish kingdom corresponds only to a way of living socially in a more extended society he thought of as 'the Church,' at once an ideal and an historical society. In his fourth rule, *de specie et genere*, Tyconius, and Augustine after him, show how, in the Scriptures, the occurrence, for example, of the city of Jerusalem or the Jewish people can be extended beyond the denotation of this singular city or that singular people and could relate to the higher order, 'genus,' that is, Christ and His Church.[52]

9.4   Christology II: The Immaculate Church and Hagiographic Writing

The immaculate Church conceived at the Creation (*Hist.* 1.1) announced from the beginning the Passion of Christ that would be fulfilled by his *adventus*, death, Resurrection, and Ascension (*Hist.* 1.16–24). Again, this Church would be fulfilled by the apostles, the martyrs, and saints, who choose to live according to Christ.[53] A filiation of sanctity of this sort is retraced in the prologue to the second book of the 'hagiographic decade' (*VJ*):

> May each one of us...spurn the temptations of the world, scorn vain desires, leave evil paths, and attempt to traverse the path of justice

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presenting Martin as a type of Christ Himself, Who, like him, revived three dead people: see *VJ* 30, 126; *Hist.* 10.31, 527; *GC* 4 (evocation of Lazarus), 301, and Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 32–35.

51   See Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History A.D. 550–800* (Princeton, 1988), 119–27.

52   *Tyconius, Le Livre des règles*. Introduction, trans. et notes J.-M. Vercruysse, Paris 2004 (Sources chrétiennes 488), 218 *de specie et genere* (on species and genera): "...in speciem genus abscondens, ut in ueterem Hierusalem totam quae nunc est per orbem, aut in unum membrum totum corpus ut in Salomone" (genus can be concealed in the species: for example, the old city Jerusalem signifies what is now spread all over the earth, the universal Church; or the whole body in a sole member, such as Solomon, member of the body, which is the Church). For the application of Tyconius' seven rules in Gregory's work, see Heinzelmann, "Structures."

53   On the apostles, see *VP* 18, prol., 283: "Hii enim apostoli merito pro tota accipiuntur eclesia quae non habens rugam aut maculam, inpolluta subsistit."

unhampered and without the burden of worldly actions. For by this path Abel is counted just, Enoch is considered blessed, Noah is set apart, Abraham is chosen, Isaac is consecrated, Jacob is amplified, Joseph is guarded, Moses is sanctified, David is fore-ordained, Solomon is enriched, the three boys prophesy amid the dewy flames, and Daniel feeds amid harmless beasts. By this path the apostles are directed, the blessed martyrs are glorified.[54]

Whereas the narrative of the *Histories* at first has the 'just' of the Old Testament parade as 'types' of the Lord, Gregory, in the second part of this first book (*Hist.* 1.25–48), takes up the long series of those who chose His succession by accepting martyrdom in Christ's name, *pro Christi nomine*. This identifying formula – corresponding thus to the 'types' of the Lord before the Incarnation – was added by Gregory several times to texts most often borrowed from Jerome's Chronicle, in which the formula does not appear.

> Iacobus...et Marcus euangelista *pro Christi nomine*...coronati sunt (*Hist.*1.26, p. 20)
> beatus Clemens...*pro Christi nomine* crucefixus adseritur (*Hist.* 1.27, p. 21)
> Iustinus philosophus...*pro Christi nomine* coronatur; in Galleis multi *pro Christi nomine sunt*...coronati (*Hist.*1.28, p. 21)
> Photinus episcopus...*pro Christi nomine* passus est (*Hist.* 1.29, p. 21)
> Babillas episcopus... Xystus... Laurentius... Hyppolitus *ob dominici nominis confessionem*...consummati sunt (*Hist.* 1.30, 22); Dionisius Parisiorum episcopus diversis *pro Christi nomine* adfectus poenis (ibid., 23)
> de stirpe Vecti Epagati fuit, quem Lugduno passum *pro Christi nomine* (*Hist.* 1.31, 24)
> Quirinus Sisciensis...*pro Christi nomine* martyrium tulit (*Hist.*1.35, 26).

At the end of the series of apostles and martyrs, Gregory introduces an ascetic and bishop to the history of the Church – Martin of Tours. The titles of the

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54 *VJ,* prol., 113; trans. W.C. McDermott, 16: "Utinam quisque nostrum...statim spraetis mundi scandalis, neglectis concupiscentiis vanis, derelictisque semitis pravis, iustitiae viam expeditus et sine inpedimento saecularium actionum conaretur inrepere. Per hanc enim viam Abel iustus suscipitur, Enoch beatus adsumitur, Noe reservatur, Abraham elegitur, Isaac benedicitur, Iacob dilatatur, Ioseph custoditur, Moyses sanctificatur, David praedestinatur, Salomon ditatur, tres pueri inter incendia rorolenta vaticinantur, Danihel inter innocuas bestias pascitur. Per hanc viam apostoli diriguntur, martyres beati glorificantur."

chapters speaking about Martin announce, first, his nativity and, in the same sentence, the discovery of the true Cross (*Hist.* 1.36; the Cross indicates the parallelism between the type, Martin, and the strongest symbol of the anti-type, that is Christ). A second chapter refers to Martin's *adventus* (*Hist.* 1.39; the texts says, "lumen nostrum exoritur" – *lumen* being another major attribute of Christ[55]). And finally, a third chapter deals with Martin's death (*Hist.* 1.48; the text says "filiciter migravit ad Christum"). The Christological bearing of this triplet is striking. Parallelism with the stages of the life of Christ stand out if one considers the first three chapters of the first book of the 'hagiographic decade,' the *Liber in gloria martyrum*: GM 1, "De nativitate domini nostri Iesu Christi in Bethleem" (cf. *Hist.* 1.16, "De nativitate Christi"); GM 2, "De miraculis domini et Salvatoris nostri" (cf. *Hist.* 1.20, "De mirabilibus et passione Christi"); GM 3, "De passione, resurrectione ac ascensione eius" (cf. *Hist.* 1.24, "De ascensione Domini et interitu Pilati atque Herodis"). In Gregory's design, no other saint represents Christ like his own episcopal predecessor in Tours, and, as a result, none is as much present throughout the ten books of the *Histories*. The memory of the holy bishop and the evidence as well as the continuity of his present miracles are regularly recalled in each historical book, corresponding in total to 160 mentions in the ten books of *Histories*, not to mention the four books of Martin's *virtutes* (VM) and the chapters about him in GC (4–12).[56]

It is therefore Martin who closes this first book as the perfect 'type' of Christ, revealing the assimilation of the saint to the model of Christ, "conformatio ad imaginem filii Dei," as Augustine says, at the same time announcing the multi-tude of future saints who constitute the body of Christ or the immaculate Church.[57] For Gregory, the 'modern' epoch, *nostrum tempus,* starts with the historical Martin; in the numbering of the eras of the world, it marks a caesura

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55   See the *diapsalma* of PT for Ps. 39, 426: "(psalmus ostendit) quod ipse (Christus) fons vitae sit et lumen aeternum."

56   Numbers compiled with the help of Denise St-Michel, *Concordance de l'Historia Francorum de Grégoire de Tours*, 1–2 (Montreal n.d. [1979]). Of the 160 occurrences, 61 refer to the basilica.

57   For *Hist.* 1.47, which is part of the typological ending of Book 1, referring to the immacu-late Church and Paradise that the first chapter speaks of, see Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 54–59. Cf. Augustin, CD 22.16, vol. 37: 522 (*breviculus*), "Qualis intelligenda sit sanctorum conformatio ad imaginem filii Dei." For the body of Christ see PT, 424 l.8, "...retributionem sanctorum sive eclesiae, quae est corpus Christi"; cf. Augustine, CD 22.18, vol. 37: 522 (*Breviculus*): "De viro perfecto, id est Christo, et corpore eius, id est ecclesia, quae est ipsius plenitudo."

in the same way as Abraham, Solomon, and Christ.[58] This narrative of present times realizes, or better – typologically speaking – *fulfills* completely the model prefigured in Book 1 of the *Histories*, with the conflicted coexistence of the *sancti* and *miseri*. Examples taken from Book 5, which relates the history of the years 574 to 580, illustrate this scheme, in which the members of the Church of Christ alternate with those persons headed for condemnation at the Final Judgment, and whose bad end here below merely anticipates an eternal punishment. We cite only the chapters that allow clear understanding of which of the two groups is in question:[59]

> Chapters 3, 4, 6: concerning two magnates full of wickedness (*malitia*) and pride (*superbia*), and a miraculously cured cleric going on to consult a Jewish physician; Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 12: each time, a saint for whom Gregory writes a biography or chapter elsewhere (*VP* 9, 11, 12, 15, and *GC* 88);[60] Chapters 14, 16, 18: *interitus* or miserable death of a count and a king's son; Chapters 19 and 30: an *elemosinarius* or alms-giving emperor placing his hope in God; Chapter 21: a saint, whose drunken end is related in *Hist.* 8.34; Chapters 25, 27, 32, 35, 36: *interitus* of two magnates, deposition of two bad bishops, an adulterous and perjuring woman, death of a bad queen, a count who persecutes a bishop; Chapters 37, 42, 45, 46: death of four holy bishops; Chapter 48: *malitia* of a bishop's persecutor; Chapter 50: a holy bishop.

Now, this book alone obviously contains a considerable amount of material to which the name 'hagiographic narrative' would be appropriate. This raises the question of a difference between historical and hagiographic discourse when one wants to separate the two series or 'decades' of Gregory's corpus. In the face of a lack of synonymous terms in the first millennium for the modern concept of hagiography and 'hagiographic genre,' the definition of a

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58   On the recapitulations of the years of the world in *Hist.* 1.48 and 10.31, see Heinzelmann, "Structures," 571–574. For the terms *nostrum tempus, nostra tempora*, or *novum tempus*, etc., see ibid. n. 16.

59   For the general theme of this chapter, the prophet and the sacriligious king (Gregory and Chilperic), see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 41–48 (German ed., 42–47).

60   *Hist.* 5.11, 206, forms part of this 'sequence of sanctity' (ch. 7–12); its subject is the conversion of the Jews of Clermont by the holy bishop Avitus, who gathered them "in sinu matris ecclesiae."

'hagiographic discourse' by Marc Van Uytfanghe offers the elements of an answer.[61] The criteria of such discourse, according to him, are, first, the focusing on a hero, the saint; next, a relationship between literary fiction and historical reality more or less determined by stylistic mechanisms; third, comes the account's double function of apology and edification, owing to a generally cultic and commemorative context; and, finally, an assemblage of themes and commonplaces related to the saint. In a recent publication, I have proposed an adjustment of the first point, namely, to replace the criterion of the focusing on the hero alone by a more general reference to Christ's Church; the latter may be represented by a saint, but also by miraculous events or other elements of sanctity.[62]

The ideal model-example for a program of this kind is the entire opus of Gregory of Tours, laid out in two decades of ten books. Whereas the ten books of history, composed of two equal parts of hagiographic and historical elements, perfectly express the ideology of the 'mixed' or terrestrial Church, the second series of ten books belongs by its main subject, sanctity, exclusively to the immaculate Church. It is therefore to this second series that the term 'hagiography' would fully apply. This distribution in accord with a theological idea seems most evident in regard to the "Seven Books of Miracles" and the book *Vita Patrum*, but it still calls for an explanation for the treatise on the Psalter (*PT*) and the final book *De cursibus ecclesiasticis* (*CS*).

The *Septem libri miraculorum*, comprising one book on the miracles of the martyrs (*GM*), one book collecting the miracles of Saint Julian of Brioude (*VJ*), four books of those of Saint Martin (*VM*), and one book on the miracles of the confessors (*GC*), constitutes the largest part of the 'hagiographic decade.' The ordering of the books, first the martyrs (*GM* and *VJ*), then the confessors (*VM*, *GC*), and the structure of the first book of *GM* (which arranges the narratives in keeping with an ecclesial hierarchy: Christ and his relations, apostles, martyrs), betray

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61   For the definition of hagiography and of 'hagiographic discourse,' see various works of M. Van Uytfanghe cited in his "Biographie II (spirituelle)," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, Suppl.-Band I, (Stuttgart, 2001), 1088–1364, with a rich bibliography. See also Martin Heinzelmann, "Hagiographischer und historischer Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours?," in *Aevum inter utrumque. Mélanges offerts à Gabriel Sanders*, (ed.) M. Van Uytfanghe and R. Demeulenaere (Steenbrugge, 1991), 237–258, and most recently idem "Évolution" as in n. 11.

62   Heinzelmann, "Évolution." See also Heinzelmann, "Diskurs," which, on the basis of episodes narrated twice in the historical and hagiographic parts of the work, shows that 'hagiographic discourse' may be found in one part or the other.

an intention to represent the universal Church.[63] Nevertheless, properly speaking, the subject is not the saints but miracles. These miracles are obviously the result of the sole *virtus Dei* and belong to Christ and His Church, just as the saints themselves find a justification of their sanctity only in the perfect representation of their model, Christ: both saints and miracles lead finally to the Lord and His Church.[64]

The book the *Life of the Fathers* (*VP*), also titled "De vita sanctorum" in its own preface, is a collection of twenty different biographies, each of whose subject is one or two saints living at a time more or less near Gregory's, the *tempora nostra*. In the case of certain saints of the diocese of Tours known personally to Gregory, his writing might indeed correspond to a sort of canonization of the person in question, notwithstanding certain weaknesses that the bishop discerned in the potential saint.[65] When introducing this book, Gregory makes much of his hesitations about writing the life of a 'modern' saint, since he believed that miracles related to martyrs' and confessors' graves were the most trustworthy signs of the presence of a divine power.[66] A little later, he comments on the words of the Lord in Matt. 7:22–3, by way of explanation:

> Assuredly He means that the virtue which comes from the tomb is much more worthy of praise than those things which a living person has worked in this world, because the latter could be blemished by the continual difficulties of worldly occupations, while the former were certainly free from all blemish.[67]

So conceived, miracles seem to be the best way to detect the presence of Christ's Church and are, for this reason, preferable for the identification of a potential saint, whose final fate is known only to God, revealed after the Final Judgment.

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63 The order: seven books on the miracles, then the books *VP, PT,* and *CS*, according to *Hist.* 10.31 (this order no doubt corresponds to the author's last wishes). The preface of *VP* adopts this order, whereas the prologue of *GC*, 298, gives *VP* as the seventh and *GC* as the eighth book. For the ten hagiographic books, see Heinzelmann, "Hagiographie," 180–189.

64 See below, 9.5.4, *Miracula – virtutes – mirabilia*.

65 So *VP* 15, 19, 20; for the 'weaknesses,' see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 175 (German ed., 152).

66 See Heinzelmann, "Hagiographie," 184–6; idem., *Gregory*, p.173–178 (German ed., 151–155).

67 *VP* 2.2, 219–220; trans. James, 13: "quia magis proficit ad laudem virtus egressa de tumulo, quam ea quae quisquam vivens gessit in mundo; quia illa labem habere potuerunt per assidua mundanae occupationis impedimenta, haec vero omnem labem ad liquidum caruerunt."

In keeping with my identification of the 'hagiographic' books as a composition focused on the holy Church of Christ, the last two books have a choice place in this context. The treatise *PT*, transmitted to us in only fragmentary form, essentially presents a list of 150 *diapsalmata* or psalm headings, that is to say, as many propositions or brief arguments each time focusing a precise Christological exegesis on the psalm in question. With the help of other interpretations, each psalm is thus reduced to one sentence, the *diapsalma*, which expresses the sense of the psalmic prophecy under consideration in relation to the Creator Christ and to His Church.[68] In this way, the series of 150 *diapsalmata* is the fullest and densest source for Gregory's ecclesiology, which will be discussed later. Contrary to the other comparable psalmic arguments (*tituli psalmorum*) of the time – six exist – Gregory's attributes a Christ-centered understanding to the totality of 150 psalms. This perfectly agrees with his idea of Christ as *principium et finis*, the foundation for everything, of which I have spoken earlier.

The tenth book of the hagiographic decade corresponds, in a first part, to the mandate when and how the psalms should be used to provide for an institutionalized and perpetual praise of God.[69] In the 'spiritual testament' (*Hist.* 10.31), Gregory entitles this book *De cursibus ecclesiasticis*, whereas the only full manuscript, dating to the late eighth century, has *De cursu stellarum ratio qualiter ad officium implendum debeat observari* ("On the course of the stars, a schedule of observation for carrying out the divine office").[70] It concerns the great miracles of Christ, Word of the Father and Creator. This time, too, the book is totally dedicated to the glory of God the Creator and of His Church. It thus fulfills the conditions for being a part of a series of properly 'hagiographic' compositions.[71]

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68   *PT*, 424–427, with the series of *diapsalmata* 1-89; for 90–150 I follow Salmon, *Les 'tituli psalmorum'* (see n. 18), 138–148 (=series v). See Heinzelmann, "Psautier " (see n. 7), 771–786; and idem, "Psalmen" (see n. 18), 33–57. I am preparing a complete edition of the *diapsalmata* and of the fragments of the commentary (*Explanatio*).

69   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 158f. (German ed., 140f.); idem, "Hagiographie," 187f.

70   In presenting the title, I follow a proposition of A.C. Murray: usually editions make a separation between *ratio* and *qualiter*, following the Bamberg manuscript, Staatsbibl. ms.patr. 61, see Barbara Obrist, "Les manuscrits du 'De cursu stellarum' de Grégoire de Tours et le manuscrit, Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale 422," *Scriptorium*, 56 (2002), 336 ("In Christi nomine incipit de cursum [*sic*] stellarum ratio, qualiter…"); the (editorial) setting of the comma seams not correct as shown by the only other manuscript from the late 8th century, Wien, ONB, ser. nov. 37 (suppl.2731) + cod. 15269, which has: "[Cur]sus stellarum. / Incipit ratio qualiter [a]d officium impleri…"

71   For these *mirabilia* of *CS*, see below 9.5.4.

9.5   The Major Theological Subjects

9.5.1   *The Triune God according to Gregory's Credo*

Gregory's Credo in the prologue to the first book of the *Histories* has a choice place in his theology: the eleven repetitions of the word *credo* (as distinct from a single occurrence of *credimus* in the Nicene Creed) underscore the personal nature of this text, in spite of its inclusion of expressions corresponding to the established formulas, especially the Old Roman creed (2nd century, but reconstructed following Rufinus in the 4th century), the Nicene Faith (*N*, of 325), and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (*NC*, 381, according to the Council of Chalcedon, 451).[72] Gregory's statement of his belief is very long, and, to the clauses of the 'credo,' it partially adds a clause of explanation:

> [1] I believe in God the Father Almighty
>
> [2] I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, born of the Father and not made, and not in the passage of time, but before all time, he has always been with the Father…[Followed by the sanction coming from the Nicene Creed:] As for those who say 'There was a time when he did not yet exist,' I reject them with loathing and I call for them to be cut off from the Church
>
> [3] I believe that Christ is that word of the Father by whom all things were made
>
> [4] I believe that this word was made flesh, and that by his passion the world was redeemed
>
> [5] and I believe it is in his manhood and not his Godhead that he suffered the passion
>
> [6] I believe that he rose on the third day, that he freed man who was lost, that he ascended to heaven, that he sits at the right hand of the Father, that he shall come and judge the living and the dead

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72   See John N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London, 1972); L.H. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed. Origin, History, and Some Early Commentaries* (Utrecht, 2002), esp. 27, for the Old Roman creed; Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 119–22 (German ed., 107–109 and n. 58); Martien Parmentier, "Credal Elements in Gregory of Tours' Histories," *Rondom Gregorius van Tours*, (ed.) M. de Jong, E. Rose and H. Teunis, Utrechtse Historische Cahiers 22, (Utrecht, 2001), 55; for the Nicene-Constantinopolitan, see also the article of W.D. Hauschild, *TRE* 24 (1994), 444–456. For other creeds, see *CPL*[3]: 569, "VIII. Symbola et expositiones fidei," no. 1744a–1763. Gregory's Credo is lacking in the list of the *CPL* in spite of its separate manuscript tradition: 4 mss of the 9th, 10th, and 12th centuries; see Parmentier, 55 n. 2, who also notes that the manuscripts cite Gregory the Great as author.

> [7] I believe that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, that he is not inferior to them…(being) co-eternal…consubstantial… equal to them in his omnipotence, sempiternal with them in his essence…
>
> [8] I believe that this holy Trinity subsists with its three persons distinct… I proclaim (*confiteor*) that in this Trinity there is only one God, one power, and one essence
>
> [9] I believe that the blessed Mary was a virgin after the birth as she was before
>
> [10] I believe that the soul is immortal
>
> [11] And I do faithfully believe all things established at Nicaea by the 318 bishops

Without a break, Gregory continues with reflections concerning the end of the world and the coming of Antichrist, and he concludes by saying that, for him, *noster finis*, both ending and purpose, is Christ.[73]

This Credo has eleven elements distributed among five different subjects: God the Father (1), Jesus Christ (2–6), the Holy Spirit (7), the Trinity (8), and diverse points: the birth of Christ by the virgin Mary, the immortal soul, the acceptance of all the constitutions of Nicaea (9–11). One rather quickly notes divergences from other confessions of faith or creeds, especially *N* and *NC*: first, Gregory's numerous dogmatic affirmations concerning the coeternal Christ, at the same time human flesh and Almighty God, then the detailed presentation of the Holy Spirit, and, last, the addition of distinct articles for the Trinity and the immortal soul.[74] The end, with Gregory's general approbation of the decrees of the bishops of the Council of Nicaea, is a counterpart to the usual reference to a catholic and apostolic Church in other existing creeds, but Gregory's declaration lends particular weight to bishops in the Church.[75]

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73   See Introduction, above, with n. 8.

74   This article (10) replaces – oddly in view of Gregory's interest in the subject (see below 9.5.5) – the resurrection of the flesh, an article present in many other creeds, such as those of Remesiana, of Hippo, of Ruspe, etc.; see Kelly, *Christian Creeds*, 171–81.

75   See *VP* 18 (*De Urso et Leobatio abbatibus*), prol., 283; trans. James, 114: "For these apostles are accepted by their merit on behalf of the whole church (*"pro tota accipiuntur eclesia"*), which lives unpolluted [citing Eph 5: 27] … Then thanks to this doctrine there have been up until our times men…shining by the greatness of their teaching." For the idea in Gregory of a society (church) represented by the bishop, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 160–66 (German ed., 141–145). See *Hist.* 9.33, 452 lines12–14, where Gregory cites some "canonum Nicenum decreta," a phrase identified by the editor Krusch (p. 452 n. 2) as a canon of the Council of Gangra (a.340), whose acts, in Gaul, are joined to the Council of Nicaea.

The identification of Christ with the Word of the Father, which we have already observed as the main subject of the prologue of *GM*, appears essential. The role of the Word as Creator of all things and founder of the Church has also been already noticed – among other places, in the *diapsalmata* of Gregory's Treatise on the Psalter (*PT*) and in his repertory of arguments against a heretic.[76] In the preface to the Life of a woman saint, Gregory bears witness most bluntly in aid of his idea of a Christ as the most active element of the Trinity:

> Since the Saviour of the world Himself from the beginning of the ages caused Himself to be seen by the primitive patriarchs, and to be proclaimed by the prophets, in the end he deigned to be received by the womb of Mary, ever virgin and untouched, and, most powerful and immortal Creator, He suffered being clothed in the garment of mortal flesh, undergoing death to restore humanity dead because of sin and to arise victorious.[77]

The substantial argumentation on the Holy Spirit (no. 7), "which proceeded from the Father and from the Son," and on the Trinity (no. 8) contradicts a large number of the other confessions of faith (though the statement on the Holy Spirit is present in the *Symbolum Athanasium*) and is echoed in certain chapters of the *Histories* that have a theological function.[78] A commentator has even wished to see "a kind of theological programme for the whole work" in Gregory's Credo, because one can find in it a good deal of the argumentation

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76   See *PT* for Ps. 106 (ed. Salmon, 145): "(psalmus ostendit) quod ipse verbum a Patre missus ab interitu nos sanaverit mortis aeternae." The article about Christ's eternity that Gregory most likes is drawn from Ps. 109:3, of which he makes this *diapsalma*: "(psalmus ostendit) quod ipse ante luciferum spiritali utero a deo patre natus sit [the psalm is showing that He Himself was born from the Father before light from a spiritual womb]," *PT* (ed. Salmon), 145; an argument against an Arian in Gregory's own mouth according to *Hist.* 5.43, 250, and *Hist.* 6.5, 269, against a Jew, in Chilperic's mouth. See Heinzelmann, "Psautier," 782.

77   *VP* 19 (*Vita Monegundis*): prol., 286, "cum ipse Salvator mundi ab illo rudis saeculi exordio patriarchis se praestat videri, prophetis adnuntiari, ad extremum semper virginis intactaeque Mariae dignatur utero suscipi, et praepotens inmortalisque Creator mortalis carnis patitur amictu vestiri, mortem pro hominis peccato mortui reparationem adire victorque resurgens."

78   In *N* there is only a cross-reference to the Holy Spirit, which in *NC* proceeds from the Father alone; Eusebius Gallicanus, *Sermo 9, De symbolo*, *PLS* 3:580: "Spiritus sanctus qui promittitur a patre mittendus." The symbolum Athanasium (*Quicumque*), may be a text of Gennadius of Marseilles. See *CPL*[3] no. 167, and *MGH AA* 4.2, 105 lines 27–28.

developed in these chapters.[79] Carolingian erudition developed collections of Gregory's arguments, in order to have a useful gathering of the case that patristics managed to find in Scriptures in favour of a son of God coeternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, a Trinity whose three elements each has a personality distinct from and equal to the two others, and having an identical essence and power.[80] The orthodox contentions drawn from the *Histories* are generally presented as a pure and simple linking of biblical citations relating to the respective subject; in the discussion, they are put forth each time by the person of Bishop Gregory himself – facing a Visigothic *legatus* (*Hist.* 5.43), or King Chilperic (*Hist.* 5.44), then Chilperic again and a Jew (*Hist.* 6.5), then another Visigothic ambassador, Oppila (*Hist.* 6.40), and a 'Sadducean' priest of Tours disputing the resurrection of the flesh (*Hist.* 10.13).[81] As far as a perspective focused on Arianism and the conversion of the Visigoths is concerned, one might also add *Hist.* 6.18 and 9.15 with two reports on the state of religion in Spain.[82] But several other chapters deserve to be called 'theological,' among them a discussion on the significance of Sunday as 'the Lord's day' (*Hist.*1.23) or on the veneration of idols (*Hist.* 2.10).

Gregory's Credo, as well as certain other of passages from him, such as the prologue to Book 3 of the *Histories*, create a certain ambiguity when they accentuate the perfect equality of the three elements of the triune God. In fact, this equality does not correspond to the actual role of Christ according to Gregory, the role of *spiritus principalis* (*Hist.* 3, prol.), of Word-Creator, founder and head of His Church (9.3 & 4, above), antitype-model of all the saints (see next section), and origin of all the miracles and wonders (9.5.4 indeed of all spiritual

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79   Parmentier, "Credal Elements," 55. The author mainly considers the case against the Visigothic Arians in *Hist.* 5.43, 44; and *Hist.* 6.18, 40, depicting different stages of Arianism down to the Catholic position of King Reccared. Disregarding other theological elements and especially the general function of Christ in Gregory's works, Parmentier summarizes (pp. 63–64): "Gregory's concern in describing this cumulative series of disputes seems to be to make us believe that he is an all round theologian, who made a significant contribution to the conversion of Spain and the defence of Catholicism in France."

80   Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "Diffusion des manuscrits," 292–3; the 8th-9th-century collections mainly pick *Hist.* 5.43. 44; *Hist.* 6.5, 40, and 8.30; but also *Hist.* 1.21, 23 (the burial of Christ and 'Lord's day').

81   See also *PT*, *diapsalma* 27 (p. 425) which states that Christ, aided by the Father, rises up from the tomb in his flesh ("florescente...carne").

82   Parmentier, "Credal Elements," 56–63; in 57–9 he treats Chilperic's ideas about the Trinity, which, following Gregory, did not distinguish the three persons and were thus in accord with the heresy of Sabellius.

and historical 'finality' (Introduction). If in the *Histories* Gregory the historian wished to put so much stress on the question of Arianism, it was not on account of the historical impact of this form of Christianity, but on account of its spiritual consequences touching above all the role of Christ for his Church and thereby the importance of the saints and miracles in society. The typological reading of history by Gregory and the construction of his work of ecclesiastical history depend entirely on the role that he attributes to Christ (see Conclusion, below).

9.5.2   *The Church – The Saints – The Faithful, according to* De vita patrum *and the* Treatise of the Psalms

I have already dealt with the *Histories*' narrative of the first manifestations of the Church: its origin corresponds to the creation of Adam and Eve by Christ (*Hist.* 1.1), its existence as the protective Ark (*Hist.* 1.4), the announcement of its redemption by the passage of the Red Sea, signifying "our" baptism (*Hist.*1:10).[83] Gregory associates this last example to the 'paths' (*divisiones*) of the Red Sea (according to Ps. 135.13), which signify for him in a spiritual sense (*spiritaliter*) the diversity of paths leading to eternal life: the first path for those who reach it and are again reborn by baptism, being capable of persevering without being stained, the second for those who convert at a later age, and the third for those capable of repressing the ardours of the flesh (*Hist.* 1.10, 12–13).

These different paths correspond to the variety of merits and qualities (*diversitas meritorum virtutumque*), the variety of life's course (*trames vitae*), or yet the ways of the saints (*proposita sanctorum*). They all lead to a single life – eternal life in the bosom of the eschatological Church, which is the main subject of the book *De Vita Patrum* or *Vita sanctorum* (*VP*, preface, 212). The twenty biographies of this collection had an aim of edification for all the members of the Church without being primarily destined for the veneration of the saint or for the cult. Of all the twenty books of the Gregorian corpus, *VP* has the maximum

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83   Cf. *PT*, *diapsalma* 23: 425, "(psalmus ostendit) quod ipse ecclesiam suam sanguine suo redemptam collocet super fluctus saeculi," et *Hist.* 1.1, "virginem inmaculatamque ecclesiam sibi exhibuit, redemptam sanguine" (the creation of Adam signifying the Church redeemed by Christ at the Passion). *Hist.* 1.10, "there is no doubt at all that this crossing of the sea and this pillar of cloud symbolize (are a type of) our baptism." For the usage of the possessive adjective *noster* by Gregory for the religious framing of society, see Martin Heinzelmann, "Histoire, rois et prophètes: Le rôle des éléments autobiographiques dans les Histoires de Grégoire de Tours – un guide épiscopal à l'usage du roi chrétien," *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, (eds.) Louis Holtz et al. (Paris 1992), vol 1: 540–2.

number of biblical citations with 97, of which 43 are in the prologues of the individual Lives.[84] As a result, the scope and tone of all these prologues of the twenty biographies are essentially homiletic and pedagogic, and thus correspond to the sermons of a spiritual guide intended for the Christian people. The subject of this collection is the sanctity of men, from the modestly faithful up to the most glorious confessor.

"Many are the stages (*gradus*) by which one may reach heaven," Gregory says when beginning his Life of the recluse Friardus, and he goes on to describe diverse stages – the desire for martyrdom, fasting, chastity, or penance (*VP* 10, prol.). In the *Vita Gregorii episcopi* (*VP* 7, prol.), this catalogue comprises charity, almsgiving, chastity, and, again, the virtue of the martyr, the last being manifestly the most perfect figure of Christ, since, like Him, he takes His cross. Confessors, however, may sometimes attain the crown of martyrdom by abstinence (*De sancto Illidio confessore*, *VP* 2, prol.). In concluding the book on the martyrs (*GM*), Gregory explains that this virtue of martyrdom is accessible to the most ordinary of the faithful: with the aid of the martyrs invoked and of the Holy Trinity, each one may himself become a martyr by renouncing the desires of the flesh.[85]

Other paths leading to heaven are accessible by choosing poverty (*De sancto Caluppane reclauso, VP* 11, prol.), rejecting anger, savouring reconciliation and absolution (*De sancto Martio abbate*, *VP* 14, prol.), or by renouncing vanity (*De sancto Senoch abbate*, *VP* 15, prol.). In the case of certain exceptional saints only, Gregory speaks of predestined saints, *praedestinati*, by identifying them with those who "have merited the knowledge of the Lord from the time they wailed in the cradle, as one reads of many, and, having known Him, they have never deviated from His precepts."[86] It is in this last group that the Church

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84   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 173–78 (German ed., 151–54); idem, "Hagiographie," 184–5. See the next section on the edification of the Church. For the inventory of scriptural sources, see nn. 188–190.

85   *GM* 106, 111, epilogue of the book, with a sermon of Gregory's on the intervention of the martyrs for all the faithful, trans. Van Dam, 133: "Therefore it is necessary for us to seek the patronage of the martyrs, so that we might be worthy to be helped by their assistance. What we are not worthy to obtain by our own merits, we can receive by their intercessions. Hence, by using the aid of the sacred Trinity and by rejecting the desires of the flesh we are worthy to become martyrs."

86   *De Lupicino atque Romano abbatibus*, *VP* 1, prol., 213; trans. James, 3: "Praedestinatorum est enim ista cum Dei ope perficere, qui ab ipsis cunabulorum vagitibus, ut saepe de multis legitur, Dominum scire meruerunt, cognitumque, numquam ab eius praeceptionibus recesserunt." See also *De sancto Nicetio Lugdonensi episcopo*, *VP* 8, prol., 240–241, with a series of biblical arguments (Jer 1:5, Matt 25:34, Rom. 8:29), speaking of a predestination to sanctity without reference to the theology of predestination, such as Augustine's.

most rejoices, but it also delights – because God commands it – in those "who turn from the world and have had the strength to complete the pious enterprise with the help of divine mercy."[87]

Christ, His Church, and the saints are the exclusive subject of the *Treatise on the Psalter* (*PT*), which has come to us in fragments that are, moreover, presented to us in an inadequate and gap-filled edition.[88] The edition is inadequate because the MGH editor did not understand the sense of the fragments. One part corresponds to an explication or commentary of the ancient titles of the psalms (*Explanatio*), following the classical models of Hilary of Poitiers and others;[89] the other part correspond to a list of *diapsalmata*, a series of sentences characterizing each psalm (Bruno Krusch mistakenly imagined that these sentences formed an index of a book composed of 89 chapters).[90] The edition is gap-filled because the two parts of the treatise must be filled out from numerous manuscripts. The importance of the psalms for Gregory is attested not only by the books *PT* and *CS*, but also by the large number of psalm citations, especially in the 'theological' chapters of the *Histories*, when the bishop intends to produce a proof that Christ and each element of the Trinity are coeternal, known to the patriarchs and prophets long before the Incarnation.[91] What chiefly matters to him is the role of the Old Testament psalms as prophetic guarantee of the fulfillment of the history of salvation from the Creation onward. It is David through whom the Holy Spirit speaks, and David who speaks in the name of the Father ("ex persona Patris") or transmits the words of the Lord ("quod Dominus per David intonat").[92] In the *CD* Augustine used the psalms in an absolutely identical way, arguing that one finds in them the prophecies of the king and prophet David about Christ and His Church.[93]

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87   *De sancto Leobardo reclauso*, *VP* 20, prol., 291; trans. James, 126.

88   See *supra*, with n. 18 and 68; the edition of the MGH follows that of H.L. Bordier in 1862.

89   Cf. *Sancti Hilarii Pictavensis episcopi tractatus super psalmos*, (ed.) Jean Doignon, CCSL 61 (Turnhout, 1997), and even Gregory of Nyssa, *Sur les titres des psaumes,* (ed.) Jean Reynard, Sources chrétiennes 466 (Paris, 2002).

90   MGH SRM 1.2, 423, "index libri ad c. 89." On these *diapsalmata* or *tituli*, of which P. Salmon (*Tituli*) has published six different series, dating from the 4th to 7th centuries, see above n. 18 and Heinzelmann, "Psalmen," 35–36.

91   For example, *Hist.* 5.11, 205: "Christum…prophetica et legali auctoritate promissum."

92   *Hist.* 2.10, p.59; *VP* 12, prol., 261:"per os psalmografi Spiritus sanctus pandit"; *Hist.* 5.43, 250: "David dicentem ex persona Patris"; *Hist.* 2.10, 59: "quod Dominus per David intonat." See Heinzelmann, "Psautier," 773–775; and also idem, "Structures."

93   *CD* 17.15, vol. 36: 432; all the sequence of ch. 9 to 18, and also elsewhere, proposes psalm exegeses.

In the commentary of *PT* (the *Explanatio*), Gregory explains the title of Ps. 5:1 *Pro his qui hereditabuntur,*[94] regarding those who shall be appointed heirs, as referring to "the reward of the saints or the Church, which is the body of Christ," and which they possess as an inheritance; and he makes the following *diapsalma* of verses 4 and 12 of the same psalm: "(the 5th psalm shows that Christ) lives in the saints ("inhabitator sanctorum") and benevolently listens to His Church" ("exauditor eclesiae," *PT*, 425). The Church of Christ is the most emphasized subject among the 150 *diapsalmata*, where it is also called an 'assembly' (*conventus ecclesiae*) and a vineyard (*vinea*); He redeemed it with His blood and He is its founder, changing its sterility into sanctity.[95] This Church is composed of the saints, who are Christ's faithful, that is to say, potentially all true Christians, without reference to an elite capable of being honoured by religious veneration.[96] The wish to address the entirety of the Christian people also fits the design of the book *De Vita Patrum*, and differs from the books on miracles – granted by the Lord to a limited elite of "friends of God."[97]

Plainly, Gregory does not propose true theological criteria for distinguishing between the Christian faithful, who are the 'common saints,' and those confirmed saints who might be allowed a cult. It is only in the context of his case for the resurrection of the bodies of all the dead at the time of the Last Judgment that he intimates that – "as we believe" – Heaven already holds those who have died as saints, "qui defuncti sunt sancti," that is to say, the saints raised in advance, before the final Judgment, to Heaven, whose miraculous power often proceeds from the grave.[98] It is the saints of this category

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94   The Roman and Gallican psalters have: "pro ea quae hereditatem consequitur"; see Heinzelmann, "Psalmen," 39 with n. 28.

95   *Diaps.* 61, 79, 23, 17, 112 and 113, respectively. See also Heinzelmann, "Psalmen," 57, with an ordering of the *diapsalmata* according to themes.

96   This is also apparent from the numerous formulas *quod ipse* [i.e. Christ] *nos* (or *nobis*, or *in nobis*) – e.g. *diaps.* 132, (ed.) Salmon, 147: "quod ipse nos…sanctificat"; and see Heinzelmann, "Psalmen," 48 n. 69.

97   This elite, Gregory puts in relief with the expression *amicus Dei* (or *Domini, Christi*), drawn from Ps. 138:17. See the quotation of it in *VM* 4, prol., "Honorandi sunt amici tui, Deus." The expression is used 16 times, especially in *VP* and *GC*, once only in the *Histories*. Synonyms are *sanctus Dei, servus Dei, vir Dei, famulus Dei*. In the *Histories*, see especially *sacerdos/sacerdotes Dei*: 28 times, as against only eight occurrences in the hagiographic books.

98   For a present 'reign' of the martyrs, see *GM* 53, 75: "Ecce quid praestat dominus Iesus Christus in terris martyribus sanctis, quos glorificatos adscivit in caelestibus regnis!." On the martyrs' graves, *Hist.* 10.13, 498, line 3–6: "Nec enim potest iudicium fieri, nisi prius resurgant mortui, quia, sicut illos, qui defuncti sunt sancti, caelum, ut credimus, retinet, de quorum sepulchris saepius virtus illa procedit, ut de his caeci inluminentur." In the

whom, according to Gregory, all Christians need for the salvation of the soul. He says as much at the end of the collection of the miracles of the martyr Saint Julian of Brioude: "As a result, the attentive reader will understand from these miracles that his salvation will be possible only if the martyrs and other friends of God lend their help" (*VJ* 50, 134). In the last chapter of the book *In gloria martyrum* Gregory gives one to understand that the martyrs, who have already entered upon eternal glory, can assert their *mediatrix venia*, mediating grace, for those who ask for their help.[99] For his own salvation, Gregory hopes for assistance from saint Martin even after eventual condemnation in the last Judgment: "And when in accordance with the judge's decision I am to be condemned to the infernal flames, he (*scil.* Martin) will protect me with the sacred shroud that shields him from boasting and reprieve me from this punishment."[100]

Also significant is a special group of *diapsalmata* within the *PT*. Their subject in Gregory's exegetical selection concerns the psalmic prophecies proclaiming the reign of Christ on earth, a reign conceived as a kingdom or a dominion existing in his age and extending over all *gentes*. The series begins with the *diapsalma* of psalm 2, announcing that Christ obtains from the Father all peoples by inheritance, "quod ipse in hereditatem capiat omnes gentes a patre" (*diaps.* 2), and continues with other psalm summaries: that all peoples venerate and fear His name (*diaps.* 101), that He will be raised over all peoples, "super omnes populos" (*diaps.* 98), that for him alone all the kingdoms of the earth will sing, "quod ipsi soli omnia regna terrae decantent" (*diaps.* 67), that He will be adored by all the kings of the earth, "ab omnibus terrenis regibus adorandus sit" (*diaps.* 71).[101] It is at the Cross that He will again (that his to say, after a time of dominion by the devil) obtain full power over the nations, "quod ipse a ligno in nationibus regnans iterato sit" (*diaps.* 95),[102] by extending His kingdom and dominion, "regnum ac dominationem" over all peoples, "super omnes gentes" (*diaps.* 102), and by extending His glory over the whole earth "in universa terra" (*diaps.* 107). In the *City of God*, Augustine dealt at length with

same manner, Gregory believes that sinners await the Last Judgment in hell; see ibid. 1.7–8: "ita credimus et peccatores in illo infernali carcere usque ad iudicium retineri."

99   *GM* 106, 111: "Unde oportet nobis eorum [scil. martyrum] patrocinia expetere, ut eorum mereamur suffragiis adiuvari…ut in illo examinationis tempore, cum illos [scil. martyres] gloria aeterna circumdat, nos aut excuset mediatrix venia aut levis poena pertranseat ." Gregory does not disclose his idea about the location of the *levis poena*, purgatory.

100   *VM* 2:60, trad. Van Dam, 259.

101   For *diapsalmata* 1–89, *PT*, 425–427; and the Salmon edition for psalms 90–150.

102   See Heinzelmann, "Psalmen," 49, and idem, "Psautier," 781, for Ps. 95:10.

this "reign of Christ and his saints for one thousand years," according to the Apocalypse 20:1–6.[103] Gregory, hostile to any precision about the length of time preceding the coming of the Antichrist, does not make use of this concept.

The existence of this present domination of Christ over all peoples of the earth, which is none other than His Church, both historical and eschatological, is so omnipresent throughout Gregory's work that it is far from satisfactory to wish to see in him the propagator of a hierarchical Church mirroring a 'Petrine primacy.'[104] An idea of this sort is suggested, however, by the unusual naming of the bishop of Rome, Gregory the Great, as *rector* of the "Church of God" (*Hist.* 10.1).[105] Nevertheless, in the design of the tenth book of the *Histories*, the church of Rome with its great, holy bishop Gregory functions as representing the eschatological Church, in the same way as does the church of Tours, in the first and last chapters respectively, without one being able to draw lessons about a hierarchical precedence based on Peter alone.[106] Even though Gregory evidently accepts an exceptional rank for the church of Rome, for its historical role, the multitude of its saints, and the presence of the apostles Peter and Paul, it is Martin, the equal of the apostles (*VM* 1:1), to whom he recognizes the greatest proximity to Christ, Who alone is the head of a Church that is best represented on earth by the collegiality of the bishops at Nicaea.[107]

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103   *CD* 20.9; see also ibid. vol. 37: 768–771, the article 'Le millénarisme,' by G. Bardy.

104   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 160–66 (German ed., 141–145), "Bishops' church and the eschato-logical church – ecclesia-ecclesiae-ecclesiae dei." The notion *ecclesia* is found 222 times in the *Histories,* having an abstract, eschatological sense about 20 times; nevertheless, the church represented by its bishop very often constitutes, for Gregory, the type of the Church of Christ. Example: *Hist.* 2.23, about two priests revolting against their holy bishop, he considers it a heresy "ut in ecclesiam non obaudiatur sacerdos Dei."

105   *Hist.* 10.1, 477: "Sed quia eclesia Dei absque rectorem esse non poterat, Gregorium diaco-nem plebs omnis elegit." See Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 78–81 (German ed., 71–73), and Alberto Ferreiro, "'Petrine Primacy' and Gregory of Tours," *Francia*, 33-1 (2006), 1–16, who nevertheless claims this concept of prerogatives for the church of Rome.

106   On the function of Book 10 of the *Histories*, see Heinzelmann, *Gregor*, 76–87 (German ed., 69–78). Nowhere is there question of Matt. 16:18 (Jesus building his church on Peter); see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 77 n. 77 (German ed., 204 n. 77).

107   The first hagiographic book, *GM*, groups the procession of saints in an ecclesial hierarchy having, at its head, Christ and his entourage (chap. 1–25), the apostles (chap. 26–34), and the martyrs grouped by origin, beginning with those of Rome (chap. 35–41) and Italy (chap. 42–46), then those of Gaul, etc. See also *GM* 82, where Gregory speaks of the "caput orbis urbs Roma," again citing seven Roman martyrs. For *GM*, see Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 38–53.

9.5.3   *Edification of the Church:* "**Exempla Sanctorum Sequi**"

It is not by chance that the subject of edification – meaning 'building (up)' not only in a more or less literal sense but also in a moral sense through instruction – is virtually absent from the *Histories*; the idea is most intensively, and repeatedly, articulated in the prefaces of the hagiographic books, above all *GM* and *VP*.[108] The prologue of *GM* – which Dom Ruinart's edition presents as preface not only for this book alone but for all the books of the 'hagiographic decade' (*PL* 71:705–706) – excels in its programmatic, even generic, character. At the same time, by the citation of John 1:1–3 and 14, it establishes a link with the prologue of the first book of the first decade, the *Histories,* and with Gregory's Credo, where Christ is the Word of the Father and the Word is made flesh. There Gregory quotes the apostle Paul, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouth, but if someone is good in edifying, let him impart grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:29), and adds:

> Therefore, it is fitting for us to follow, write and speak of those things which build up the Church of God ("quae eclesiam Dei aedificent") and which, through holy instruction, cause barren minds to become fruitful in the knowledge of perfect faith ("quae mentes inopes ad notitiam perfectae fidei instructione sancta faecundent").[109]

Giselle de Nie provides an excellent account of the manner in which Gregory conceives of the transformation of words into a truth of faith through "the dynamic pattern of Creation," that is, by Christ the Word of God.[110] In this way, hagiographic subjects, by reference to the evangelical message and the testimony of 'holy' things, are suited to transforming those with "barren minds" into members of the Church that is built up or 'edified' in this way. In this

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To support his thesis of a Petrine primacy, when faced with the limited role of Peter in the hagiographic books, Ferrero, "Primacy," 11, highlights *Hist.* 1.25: "An entire chapter in the *Libri historiarum* is devoted to the life, deeds, and martyrdom of Peter." The chapter entitled "De passione apostolorum atque Nerone" features Nero, Simon Magus, and Paul. See also *GC* 26, speaking of James instituted as bishop (of Jerusalem) by Christ, whereas *GC* 27 has Peter instituted bishop by the apostles.

108   The notion of spiritual edification is found only once in the *Histories* (2.34, 82–3), regarding the letters of Avitus of Vienne, which destroyed heresy in their time and now "edify the Church of God."

109   *GM* prol., 37; trans. de Nie, "Language," 2.

110   De Nie, "Language," 29; de Nie also quite plausibly notes the connection of the prologue of *GM* to the treatise *In Iohannis Evangelium* of Augustine.

sense, the *diapsalmata* for psalms 112 and 126 recall that "He, the Word, changed his Church, long barren, into a holy fecundity," and that "He Himself builds up in us what is good by maintaining that which is edified."[111]

Later, but still in the *GM*, Gregory will specify by what means this 'building' may take place, by declaring that "the building of the Church, this is the glory of the martyrs and the virtue of the saints" (*GM* 30, 56). The realizing of this idea corresponds to nothing less that the assiduous and pious reading of the Passions of martyrs and Lives of confessors. Gregory makes this point in the prologue of a saint's life in which he maintains: "The Church of the faithful is being built every time the acts of the saints are reported with devotion."[112] Elsewhere he specifies his meaning in postulating that "the human mind must carefully and constantly investigate the life of the saints, so that, incited by that study and inflamed by that example, it might always turn to what it knows to be pleasing to God." In this way, the saints in the end attain the position of teachers of eternal life – *doctores vitae aeternae*.[113] From his own pastoral experience, Gregory provides the successful example of him prescribing intensive reading of the *Monastic Institution* (of Cassian) and the book *Vita Patrum* (of Rufinus) for one of his hermits who was tempted by the devil to change his cell.[114]

The goal of hagiographic literature thus tends toward the knowledge of the things of God by the example of the saints and their exemplary lives, examples that the Saviour, *Salvator mundi,* asks the faithful to follow.[115] As a result, the exhortation to follow the examples of the saints, "exempla sanctorum sequi" (*VP* 16, prol., 274), may be considered the motto of an entire literary genre which, in the 6th to the 8th centuries, conveys a substantial part of the Christian message. I have shown elsewhere how the deeds and miracles of the saints of

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111   *PT*, (ed.) Salmon, *Tituli*, 145, 146, *diaps.* 112: "(psalmus ostendit) quod ipse ecclesiam suam diu sterilem in fecunditatem verterit sanctitatis"; et *diaps.* 126: "quod ipse in nobis quae bona sunt aedificat et aedificata conservat."

112   *VP* 20, prol.; trans. James, 126. See further the general preface of *VP*, 212, in which Gregory writes "eclesiam aedificare putavi…quia sanctorum vita…auditorum animos incitat ad profectum"; *VP* 10.1, 256: "parumper ad aedificationem eclesiae dicere dilectat animo."

113   *VP* 16, prol., 274; trans. James, 100.

114   *VP* 20.3, 292, trans. James, 128: "I …began to exhort him and assure him that it was an artifice of the devil. And when I had left him I sent him books of the Life of the Fathers and the Institution of the Monks, in order that he might learn what hermits had to do and with what care monks had to live."

115   *VP* 4, prol., 224, "sanctorum exemplis inlecti, prudenter intellegentes quae Dei sunt," and *VP* 19, prol., 286, "Qui (scil. Salvator) nos exemplis sanctorum vivere…cohortatur."

the very early Middle Ages were conceived as a 'rewriting' of the deeds and miracles of the Lord in the Gospels, thus giving an almost biblical quality to the hagiography of the age.[116] At the same time, it was inevitable that the enormous weight of hagiographic writing as spiritual guide for an entire society led necessarily to a diversion, and at least a certain weakening, of abstract thought in theological matters, to which Gregory, by his education and bibliographic resources, surely still had access.

9.5.4   Miracula – Virtutes – Mirabilia

Heir to both old Roman ideas and biblical tradition, the miraculous is a social, religious, and literary phenomenon constantly present throughout all Antiquity. The pagan historians of the 4th–5th centuries (Ammianus Marcellinus, the *Historia Augusta*) amply made use of the ideological role of the miraculous to the profit of Roman power. For the genre of ecclesiastical history, however, Augustine's *City of God* is the first work utilizing *miracula* to testify to the visible presence of the Church of Christ on earth.[117] Augustine is also first in systematically preferring the word *miraculum*, which he uses in 34 chapters of Book 10 of the *CD*, and especially in the 'eschatological' Books 21 and 22. To some extent, it is he who made the miracle a true 'theological' subject, in part by a detailed phenomenology of miracles, with chapters on those brought about by demons, ancient gods, angels, the Old Testament God, and the *mirabilia* of nature.[118] In surprising agreement with this model, Gregory dealt with the spurious miraculous powers, *falsae virtutes,* practiced by Chus, the first inventor of idolatry, *primus idolatriae adinventor* (*Hist.* 1.5), Simon Magus (*Hist.* 1.25), the Arian bishop Cirola (*Hist.* 2.3), and, in his own day, a seeress, "spiritum Phitonis habens" (*Hist.* 7.44), as well as *pseudoprophetae* (*Hist.* 9.6 and 10.25).[119] The longest chapter of the 22 books of *CD* (22.8) concerns present-day miracles. Augustine first notes in them

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116   Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 23–37, especially 32–37.

117   Martin Heinzelmann, "Die Funktion des Wunders in der spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Historiographie," in *Mirakel im Mittelalter,* (ed.) M. Heinzelmann, K. Herbers and D.R. Baue*r*, Beiträge zur Hagiographie 3 (Stuttgart, 2002), 23–61: 41–45 for miracle in Augustine; 46–57 for miracle in Gregory. See *CD* 16.5, for wonders outside the course of nature showing God's presence.

118   Heinzelmann, "Funktion," 41–45, esp. 43 with n. 90. See also the article of G. Bardy and F.-J. Thonnard, "Le miracle dans la théologie augustinienne," in the edition of *CD* (cited, above, n. 20), vol. 37: 795–801. According to Bardy, ibid. 797, there is nevertheless no real "théorie philosophique du miracle" in Augustine.

119   See Heinzelmann, "Funktion," 57.

their function as a reinforcement of the faith and ends by confirming their abundance at the present time, saying "manifestations of divine power abound, in every way similar to those of ancient times, which should not escape the knowledge of a good number of people."[120]

In the whole of Gregory's work, the miraculous element is more abundantly represented than in Augustine, but also more systematically. Because Gregory's design of systematically displaying many miracles as the most trustworthy indicators of the existence of Christ's Church has not been understood, he has earned the reputation of being a credulous simpleton.[121] In the 427 chapters of the *Histories*, about one-fifth are concerned with miracles, something that is unequalled in any other work of history.[122] For the 'hagiographic decade' – the seven books of miracles, *VP, PT, and CS* – the crucial role of miracles seems obvious, even though there are shades of difference: Gregory's suspicion of miracles brought about by living saints, explained in the preface to *VP,* has already been mentioned, and, in *CS*, it is the *mirabilia*, the wonders of God in nature, that are dealt with.[123] The *diapsalmata* of *PT* do not contain the word 'miracle,' but cite marvellous deeds of Christ, the greatest of which, according to Augustine, was his glorious Ascension, a miracle at the origin of all miracles.[124]

In the same way that Augustine had ordered the drafting of narratives, *libelli,* attesting to recent miracles, so Gregory looked to the meticulous writing down of the present-day miracles of the saints of his diocese, starting with Martin and Julian of Brioude, in whose honour a monastery had been founded

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120   *CD* 22.8, vol. 37: 556–597, and cf. ibid. 558–9 and 584–5: "cum videremus antiquis similia divinarum signa virtutum etiam nostris temporibus frequentari et ea non debere multorum notitiae deperire."

121   On such criticism, from the *Histoire literaire de France*, vol. 3 (Paris,1735) to André Vauchez (1999), see Heinzelmann, "Funktion," 47 with nn. 104 et 105.

122   Heinzelmann, "Funktion," 56–57.

123   See also *Hist.* 4.34, where Gregory speaks of a miracle-making monk of his time, whose name he does not wish to give ("nomen monachi, quia superest, nominare nolo"), fearing the danger of vainglory.

124   *Diaps*. 145, (ed.) Salmon, 148: "(the psalm shows) that he leads the righteous, causes the blind to see, and frees those in bonds"; see also *diaps*. 76: "that he alone makes great wonders (*mirabilia*)"; or *diaps*. 113: "that he transforms the hard rock into a source of holiness." *CD* 22.8: "That many miracles were made to bear witness to that singular grand health-giving miracle whereby Christ ascended into the heavens in the flesh in which He rose from the dead, we cannot deny." Gregory celebrates the Resurrection in *diapsalmata* 3, 4, 24, 53, 58.

at Tours at the beginning of his episcopate.[125] The miracles, *virtutes,* of Martin of Tours in four books, the last left unfinished, no doubt correspond most to the *libelli* drafted according to the ideas of Augustine. The entering of information follows a strictly chronological plan.[126] As for the narrative, it largely cites witnesses to the miracle in question, often the author himself, from time to time offering a few declarations of his own (*Eigenrede*, in German), in the manner of homiletic discourse.[127] At no time does Gregory leave any doubt about the fact that every miracle, brought about by a saint in his lifetime or at his grave, comes from Christ, and that the 'modern' miracle is a repetition of facts prefigured in the Gospels, thus a sort of 'rewriting' of the action of Christ and the Apostles.[128] Originally Christ preached the Father in this world to reveal Himself through his miracles also as God, *"*praedicavit Patrem in saeculo, ut et se virtutibus ostenderit Deum (*Hist.* 6.40, 311)." In the *Histories*, the parallelism of the passages concerning the miracles of Christ and of Saint Martin indicates the identical design of their respective actions: on one hand, Christ, producing portents and signs, *prodigia et signa,* to reveal clearly to people that he is God, "manifestissime se Deum populis esse declarat"; on the other hand, Martin of Tours, revealing to people through many miracle that Christ the son of God is true God, "Christum Dei filium per multa miracula verum Deum in populis declarans*."*[129] "Miracle is a marvel in relation to Christian revelation and its function is to corroborate it in people's eyes; miracle provokes the witness or listener to reverential admiration and disposes him toward the faith or fortifies him in the faith."[130]

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125   *CD* 22.8 (the subject is miraculous healings in the cities of Calama and Hippo): "...still I could not gather them all, but only those about which *libelli* have been written with a view to being read in public. We have arranged for their drafting." See *VJ* 34 where Gregory gives the monks relics of Saint Julian that he had brought from Auvergne. For *VJ*, see Danuta Shanzer, "So many saints – so little time...the *Libri Miraculorum* of Gregory of Tours," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 13 (2003), 19–60.

126   See Martin Heinzelmann, "Une source de base de la littérature hagiographique latine: le recueil de miracles," in *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés, IVᵉ-XIIᵉ siècles* (Paris 1981), 237–240, with the precise dating of miracles, from *VM* 2.12 (11 November 574) to *VM* 4.45 (4 july 593). For *VM*, see also Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 23–37.

127   For *Eigenrede*, see Felix Thürlemann, *Der historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours* (Bern, Frankfurt a.M., 1974). These speeches are frequent in Books 1 and 2 of *VM*, which were published in Gregory's lifetime. They are rare in *VM* 3 and absent from *VM* 4. Because the last book was not finished, one may conjecture that, in its last part, homiletic discourse was being reserved for a final draft.

128   Heinzelmann, "Funktion," 52–53 and idem, "Réécriture", 33.

129   *Hist.* 1.20, 17; 1.39, 27. Cf. *CD* 18.46: "ut in se commendaret deum, miracula multa fecit."

130   Guy-Marie Oury, "Le miracle dans Grégoire de Tours," *Histoire des miracles* (Angers, 1983), 11–28; quotation, 13.

The fundamental dependence of all miracles on the divine and evangelical variety based upon the *virtus Dei* is likewise confirmed by the choice of the word *virtus*/*virtutes*, which Gregory much prefers to *miracula* or *signa*.[131] The action of the *virtus Dei* working in the still living saint, then by the intermediary of his relics and grave, is consistently explained in the preface to the four books *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi* (*VM*):

> The miracles which the Lord our God deigned to perform through his priest, the blessed Martin, in the flesh, he now deigns to confirm daily to strengthen the belief of the faithful. God who acted in him when he was in this world now endows his tomb with miraculous powers, and He who then sent him as a priest to the nations about to perish offers blessings to Christians through him. Therefore let no one doubt past miracles when he beholds the gift of the present signs given forth, since he sees the lame made straight, the blind given sight, demons put to flight, and other kinds of disease cured by his healing.[132]

As regards the 'genre' of the collections *GM* and *GC*, there is no true literary model.[133] The chief object is nevertheless the same as that of the collections of the miracles of Martin and Julian: to bear witness in each chapter to the active eschatological church in Gregory's time, through the miracles worked at the graves of the martyrs and confessors. But the two collections also offer at the same time to the faithful an 'edifying' lesson (cf. 9.5.3 above) and, moreover, documentation of an important series of renowned charismatic helpers, as confirmed by their miracles. Brought together, they would be available for those seeking intervention before God, benefitting the salvation of all the faithful.[134]

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131   Heinzelmann, "Funktion," 55–56. In the ten books of the *Hist.* also, *virtus, virtutes* is used 93 times, a number to which must be added the 14 occurrences of *virtus Dei. Miracula*: 27 times, *signa*: 26, of which 11 refer to natural prodigies.

132   *VM* 1, pref., 135; trans. McDermott, 17: "Miracula, quae Dominus Deus noster per beatum Martinum antistitem suum in corpore positum operari dignatus est, cotidie ad conroborandam fidem credentium confirmare dignatur. Ille nunc exornans virtutibus eius tumulum, qui in eo operatus est, cum esset in mundum; et ille praebet per eum beneficia christianis, qui misit tunc praesolem gentibus perituris. Nemo ergo de anteactis virtutibus dubitet, cum praesentium signorum cernit munera dispensari, cum videat clodos eregi, caecos inluminari, daemones effugari et alia quaeque morborum genera, ipsum medificante, curari." See Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 33–37.

133   Heinzelmann, "Hagiographie," 182–183; Shanzer, "Saints," 37–38.

134   *GC* 110, 370, with a sort of epilogue of the book, where Gregory urges those seeking eternal life not to strive just through their own efforts, but to ask God, who provides it

Significantly, Gregory does not provide a theological explanation, either for the role of the martyrs, or for the existence and the function, strictly speaking, of their relics.[135] His acceptance of the cult of relics rests on the sole authority of tradition – a tradition that is not theological apparently in the strictest sense of the term. In his attitude toward the miraculous, Gregory, while approaching Augustinian positions, essentially depends on a belief (*dogma*) that brings the miracle directly back to the gifts of the Lord Himself; in his Christocentric universe, all elements may bear a theophanic function at any time.[136] Starting from this fundamental conviction, he is in accord with an important popular tradition and a widespread taste for the miraculous. By this logic, in speaking of objects related to the life and passion of the Lord, Gregory may exclaim "but what do I rashly dare to say about them, since faith believes that everything that the sacred body touched is holy?"[137]

This attitude extends to other types of wonder by the hand of God that we might not immediately associate with miracle – namely the natural world. The following comment from his work on the stars and church offices comes following the description of the traditional seven wonders of the world, all created by man and thus destined to ruin.[138]

> For there are other wonders that our Almighty God Himself renews daily on His own in this world, or which he presents again after the passage of an entire year, [wonders] that manifest themselves in the abundance of His generosity, such as the movement of the ocean or the fructification of the earth. Others are evidenced so as to reveal His power, such as the sun, the moon, the stars, the Phoenix; still other wonders call sinners to order by

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"illorum intercessione sancta, quorum hic liber sacra prodit miracula"; cf. likewise *GM* 106, *supra*, n. 85.

135   Gregory nowhere refers to Apoc. 20:4 to explain the contemporary role of the martyrs in his own time, as Augustine does in *CD* 20.9.

136   Gift of the Lord: see, e.g., *CS* 10, 410; the reference is to the tides: "This is the first miracle that the Lord prepared for the human race so that it might both excite wonder and render service." For *dogma*, see the Conclusion. – Theophanic function : J.Y. Lacoste, "Miracle, B: Théologie historique et systématique," *Dictionnaire critique,* 740.

137   *GM* 6, 42; trans. Van Dam, 27: "Sed quod ego temerarius de his loqui audeo, cum fides reteneat, omne quod sacrosanctum corpus attigit esse sacratum."

138   In the manuscript tradition, the first part of *CS* with chap. 1 to 8, augmented in part by other chapters (9 to 16), has a distinct tradition under a title such as *De septem miraculis huius mundi,* etc.; see Obrist, "Les manuscrits du 'De cursu stellarum,'" 335–345, with a list and description of the manuscripts; and see above, n. 70. The chapter numbering is that of the Krusch edition.

evoking the eternal fire, such as Etna and the fountain of Grenoble. For these are wonders that at no time grow old, that suffer no collapse, that are not diminished by any wear, unless it is when the Lord will order the world to disappear.[139]

The work, called *De cursibus ecclesiasticis* in *Hist.* 10.31, or *De cursu stellarum ratio qualiter ad officium implendum debeat observari*, in the oldest manuscript, is a compound of different texts with their respective objectives, whose original part was probably a regulation of the hours throughout the entire year. These were the seasonal hours when the clerics of Tours cathedral had to arise in the night, before the beginning of the day, to recite a certain number of psalms. This part was accompanied by drawings of the stellar constellations allowing the desired hour to be identified.[140] To this everyday manual, Gregory imparted a notable dimension of hagiographic edification by adding a long introductory part concerning the great miracles of God.[141] Once again, he could take his bearings from Augustine's *CD,* where precisely the question of the *miracula visibilium naturarum* is given a detailed explication.[142]

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139   *CS* 9, 410, trans. from the French of P. Bourgain and M. Heinzelmann: "Nam sunt alia [miracula] quae ipse omnipotens Deus noster proprio opere in hoc mundo vel per dies singulos renovat, vel post transacto anni curriculum repraesentat, quae et in locupletatione ostenduntur muneris, ut est commotio oceani et fructus terrae; alia vero in ostensione proferuntur virtutis, ut est sol, luna, stellae, Phinix; et quaedam ex his peccatores arguunt et ignem infernalem figurant, ut est Ethna, fons Gratianopolitanus. Haec sunt enim miracula, quae nulla aetate seniscunt, nullo occasu occidunt, nulla labe minuuntur, nisi cum Dominus mundum dissolvi praeceperit."

140   See W. Bergmann and W. Schlosser, "Gregor von Tours und der 'rote Sirius.' Untersuchungen zu den astronomischen Angaben in 'De cursu stellarum ratio,'" *Francia* 15 (1987), 43–74; A. Loose, *Astronomische Zeitbestimmung im frühen Mittelalter:* De cursu stellarum *des Gregor von Tours*, Diss. Naturwiss., Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie, Bochum (Bochum, 1988); further, J.M. Hanssens, *Nature et genèse de l'office des matines* (Analecta Gregoriana, 57, Rome, 1952), 90–93.

141   See also the *diapsalma* for Ps. 76, "quod ipse [scil. Christus] faciat mirabilia magna solus," *PT,* 427, and (ed.) Salmon, *Tituli*, 143.

142   *CD* 10.12; 20.4,6,8; see also the complementary n. 80, G. Bardy, "Le miracle et sa théologie," in *CD* vol. 34: 623–625. Heinzelmann, "Funktion," 51 and n. 127. Other important texts of Augustine on this subject: *Sermo* 126.3.4, PL 38:699 ("miracula insolita fecit Christus, ut et in quotidianis quae viluerant, agnosceretur factor"), and *Tractatus in Ioannis evangelium* 8, PL 35:1450–1458, ibid. 24, PL 35:1592–1596 ("Miracula quae fecit Dominus noster Jesus Christus…ad intelligendum Deum de visibilibus admonent humanam mentem").

Among these great miracles of Christ the Creator-Word are thus also counted the movement of the ocean (the tides) and the renewal of fruit and trees, signifying bodily resurrection according to Gregory. Drawing on a poem attributed to Lactantius, Gregory also sees the resurrection in the Phoenix bird, which after having been wholly burned "regains its previous state and proceeds with the same appearance, the same feathers, the same restored color that it had before its death. This marvel is a perfect figuration of the resurrection of man, and it evidences how the human being, made of mud and reduced to dust, will again be resurrected from the ashes when the trumpet of judgment will sound" (CS 12, 411). Other wonders created to catch man's attention are presented as signs of divine power, such as the sun, the moon, and the stars, and in signs recalling infernal fire, such as the volcano of Etna and the springs of Grenoble.

9.5.5   *The General Resurrection of Bodies: Hagiographic Documentation of a Theological Dogma* (Hist. *10.13 –* CS *11 –* Passio Septem Dormientium *–* GM *94*)

The dogma of the general resurrection of bodies at the end of the world, at the moment of Final Judgment, is one of the main subjects of the last part of the *City of God*, a model that seems to have been imitated in the weighty Chapter 13 of the last, 'eschatological,' book of the *Histories* (*Hist.* 10.13), entitled "A Dispute about Resurrection."[143] A priest of Tours "infected by the venom of the Sadducean heresy (*malignitas*)," disputed the future resurrection with biblical arguments (Gen 3:19; Ps. 1:5, 102:16, 145:4; John 3:18), to which Gregory was able to reply with a better exegesis of the verses in question and, notably, with the testimony of more than thirty other citations drawn from the two Testaments.[144] For the bishop, the issue was confidence in the promises of God concerning the recompense of the righteous and the wretched at the Final Judgment.[145] Over and above a biblical case going well beyond Augustine's in the number of cited verses, the discussion between Gregory and his priest is also based on arguments grounded in common sense, such as the resurrection of bodies devoured and digested by animals (*Hist.* 10.13, 497 lines 9–13), questions that had also been raised before by

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143   *CD* 20.20;22.5,20,25–28; see also the analytic table in vol. 37: 944–945.

144   See Act. 23:8, "Sadducaei enim dicunt, non esse resurrectionem."

145   See further the citation above, n. 153, based on 2 Cor. 5:10, which is in *Hist.* 10.13 and 2.3, 41. See also the *diapsalmata* of *PT*, among others no. 57, 426: "(psalmus ostendit) quod ipse sanctis suis de impiorum nece vindictam iuditio iusto retribuat."

Augustine (*CD* 22.20). But for Augustine, it was chiefly the objections of pagan philosophy – of Plato, Porphyry, or even Cicero – that roused his response, whereas for Gregory, the case remained wholly tied to the reading and exegesis of Holy Scriptures.

In doubting resurrection for all men, the priest of Tours no doubt expressed widespread popular fears at the time, and not the teaching of some current heresy. For Gregory what mattered was a reply that went beyond the context of the one chapter in the *Histories* and resonated with, in the first instance, the theological interests of a wider clerical public.[146] In *De cursu stellarum* (*CS*), he therefore added two miracles or wonders representing resurrection, including the Phoenix bird already mentioned in the previous section. The other, more conclusive argument, identified by Gregory in the *CS* as the second great wonder of God in the world, after the tides of the ocean, was one that he had already deployed in the chapter of the *Histories* in reply to his incredulous priest. This is the natural cycle of trees, which are full of leaves in summer that they lose in winter to be once more covered, as if rising again, "quasi resurgentes," in spring. Likewise, the seed, when cast inert in the furrows rises again, with a yield of many fold, "cum multiplici fructu resurgunt" (*Hist*. 10.13, 499). In *CS* Gregory also adds a testimony of the apostle Paul, who took this process as a figuration of the resurrection:

> Paul…says, 'What you sow takes on life only on condition of first dying.' 'So it is also,' he says, 'for the resurrection of the dead: what is sowed in weakness awakens full of life, etc..' It is the same thing for the natural cycle of the trees, which, in my opinion, has the signification of the resurrection, because in winter they are deprived of leaves, as if dead, in spring, however, they are adorned with leaves, decorated with flowers, and, in summer, covered with fruit.[147]

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146 See also the *diapsalmata* of *PT* where the Resurrection of Christ, model of all resurrection, is often evoked: *diaps*. 4, 11, 24, 29, 46, 56, 58, 87, 92, 98, 107, and especially *diaps*. 27 (see n. 81).

147 *CS* 11, 410. On the first Pauline statement, "Quod seminas non vivificatur, nisi prius moriatur," cf. 1 Cor 15:36: "insipiens tu quod seminas non vivificatur nisi prius moriatur." The citation, slightly different, is used too in *Hist*. 10.13, 499. On the second statement, "Sic est et resurrectio mortuorum: seminatur in infirmitate, surgit in virtute, et cetera", cf. 1 Cor 15, 42–43: "sic et resurrectio mortuorum ('seminatur in corruptione surgit in incorruptione seminatur in ignobilitate surgit in gloria') seminatur in infirmitate surgit in virtute." The passage in parentheses from verse 1 Cor 15:42, is also a part of the argument of Gregory in *Hist*. 10.13.

The transformation of the harvests and the trees very strongly recalls two chapters of the pseudo-Augustinian Sermon 109, whose parallel argument others have already noted for the chapter of the *Histories*, but not for the *cs,* where the parallelism is even more evident.[148] Here is a comparison of extracts about the natural cycle of trees, which in the Sermon and the *cs* follow discussions of the meaning of seed:

Sermo 109.4	*cs* 11
Videmus certe hiemis adventu arbores spoliari pomis, nudari foliis; sed eas rursus verno tempore speciem resurrectionis exprimere: quae primo quidem incipiunt turgere in gemmis, tum ornari in floribus, vestiri in foliis, et postmodum pomis gravari[149]	Aequa est enim et arborum natura, quae, ut puto, ipsam resurrectionem signat, cum in hieme nudatae foliis tamquam mortui habentur, verno vero tempore ornantur foliis, decorantur floribus, pomisque aestate replentur[150]

Nevertheless, Gregory's most significant reply to doubts about the general resurrection of the dead is the illustration of this subject by a hagiographic narrative: the Passion of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, known to Gregory through one of his many oriental acquaintances, perhaps the Iohannes Syrus with whom he had undertaken a first translation of the text into Latin, probably on the basis of a Greek original.[151] The oldest tradition of the Passion, composed in the 5th century and propagated throughout the entire East in

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148　*Hist.* 10.13, 499 n. 1. The sermo is in PL 39:1961–62 (chap. 3–4). Cf. *cpl*[3] no. 368, 138. According to the cited bibliography, the *sermo* dates to the mid-6th century, in Northern Italy.

149　"We see, with the coming of winter, trees despoiled of fruit and stripped of leaves; but again in spring time they portray a type of the ressurection. What begins at first to swell with buds, is then decked with flowers, clad in leaves, and soon weighed down with fruit."

150　"The same is equally true of trees, which I believe signify that ressurection, since in winter they are stripped of leaves as if they were dead, but in the spring time are adorned with flowers, and in summer filled with fruit."

151　See Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 59–68, with the relevant bibliography n. 171f. The *Passio* has editions in Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Ethiopian, and Latin, partly from 5th–6th c. It is edited in MGH SRM 7:757–69 (BHL 2313). On the language of the hypotext of Gregory's translation ("translata in latinum per Gregorium episcopum interpretante Iohanne Syro"), see Heinzelmann n. 173.

many languages, must have been known to Gregory also from the work of Theodosius *De situ terrae sanctae*.[152] This first Latin translation, which does not form part of the two decades of books mentioned in the catalogue of works of Gregory's 'spiritual testament' (*Hist.* 10.31), was rewritten by Gregory himself in the *In gloria martyrum* (*GM* 94). The rewriting, done by applying a clever brevity to the original narrative, proves the extraordinary interest that Gregory had for the true subject of the Passion of the Sleepers, which, according to him, was the resurrection of the dead at the time of the Final Judgment.

The Passion relates the history of seven Christian adolescents fleeing the persecutions of the emperor Decius. The Seven withdrew to a grotto near Ephesus and fell into a deep sleep; the entrance of the cave was blocked by the emperor. A century and a half later, the martyrs awoke in the days of Emperor Theodosius, just at the time when the heresy of the Sadduceans, denying the resurrection, proliferated. After the opening of the cave, and the discovery of the lead plate that related the history of the Seven and had formerly been walled into the grotto with them, the emperor, concerned with the current success of the heresy, was immediately called. At his arrival, the seven martyrs addressed to him a collective, solemn discourse, which the rewriting of the Passion in *GM* presents as the glorious apogee of the narrative. In chorus, the seven martyrs complain of the nascent heresy denying the resurrection of the dead and thereby the promises of God. "And so, to make you know that, according to the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 5:10), we must all be brought before the tribunal of Christ, the Lord has ordered us to be awakened and to tell you this."[153]

In this last version of the story, the reference to Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:10), absent from the hypotext of the Latin *passio*, establishes a link with *Hist.* 10.13 and especially with the pseudo-Augustinian sermon that seems to have influenced Gregory.[154] Gregory's procedure, which transforms the hagiographic tale into a certified proof of the truth of Christian doctrine, is significant for other tales of the hagiographic genre. The lead plate of the martyrs' time bearing witness to their story, recovered under Theodosius, serves moreover as a first model of such a hagiographic 'proof.'

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152   Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 60 n. 175.

153   *GM* 94, 102: "Ergo ut scias, quia omnes iuxta apostolum Paulum (2 Cor 5:10) repraesentandi erimus ante tribunal Christi, idcirco iussit nos Dominus suscitari et tibi ista loqui." The same citation is in *Hist.* 10.13, 498. See Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 59–68, especially 67, with a detailed comparison of the two versions of the Passion, whose rewriting accentuates to a considerable extent the focus on theological doctrine.

154   *Hist.* 10.13, 498 line 27; Sermo 109.1, PL 39:1961.

**9.6   Conclusion: *Nobis in Eclesiasticum Dogma Versantibus* –
Theology and Typological thinking of a Merovingian Bishop**

On rare occasions, Gregory allows us to discern his knowledge of certain theological works, without ever specifying the *scripta ecclesiastica* that he studied in his youth (*vp* 2, prol.). Beyond an unquestionable competence in the Scriptures and his knowledge of his historiographic models, from which he sometimes even borrowed whole passages, he refers to a quite large number of hagiographic texts, *vitae* and *passiones*, and a considerable number of pieces of Christian poetry.[155] As for properly 'theological' books mentioned as such, he rarely bothers to cite the title of any: in *Hist*. 1.28, he notes, however, the (Greek) books of Saint Justin[156] and in *Hist*. 1.38 he speaks of books "pro fide catholica" composed by the *doctor eclesiae* Hilary of Poitiers, probably the *De Trinitate*, which must have been of use to him in 580, against the trinitarian arguments of King Chilperic.[157] Finally, in *Hist*. 2.34, Gregory evokes the entire œuvre of Avitus of Vienne, comprising nine books of letters, a homiliary, and six books in verse on various matters, *De diversis conditionibus*, whose first book, "De initio mundi," served him in the design of the beginning of his *Histories*.[158]

In addition to these rare allusions to patristic literature, one notes a few of the bishop-theologian's references to the authority of *doctores ecclesiae*, or of predecessors or 'fathers' (*priores, patres*). Our author also evokes Christian doctrine (*doctrina*), but it is especially his reference to the term *dogma* that sometimes goes beyond the simple meaning of 'doctrine conveyed by Scripture.'[159] This feature will allow us a deep understanding of the fundamental principle of Gregory's theology.

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155   For his hagiographical sources, see Heinzelmann, "Hagiographie"; for the poetic sources, idem, "Réécriture," 38–53.

156   *Hist*. 1.28, 21, line 11, "Iustinus philosophus post scriptos catholicae ecclesiae libros…coronatur": Gregory could have known a Latin edition of the *Apologies* or even perhaps the *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho* (model of *Hist*. 6.5, discussion of Gregory with the Jew Priscus).

157   Krusch, 27 n. 3, identifies the relevant item as *De Trinitate contra Arianos*, or *De fide* after its original title. On Chilperic, *Hist*. 5.44, 253, where Gregory replies to the king: "hoc te oportit sequi, quod nobis post apostolus alii doctores eclesiae reliquerunt, quod Elarius Eusebiusque docuerunt." The latter is Eusebius of Vercelli.

158   For the letters, *Hist*. 2.34, 82–3: "extant exinde nunc apud nos epistolae admirabiles, quae sicut tunc heresim oppraesserunt ita nunc eclesiam Dei aedificant." In the *Histories,* Gregory often speaks of letters or letter collections whose text he can even quote. For the non-epistolographic sources, see Heinzelmann, "Structures," 580 n. 41.

159   *Doctrina*: *Hist*. 5.43 ("doctrina Petri et Pauli apostolorum"); *gm* 55 ("spiritalis doctrina," transmitted by a vision); *vp* 18, prol. ("doctrina apostolorum"); *gc* 110 (epilogue de *gc*, "doctrina sanctae scripturae"); *cs* 11 ("Dominus spiritalis doctrinae sator").

At the end of his opening Credo, Gregory affirms his faith in what had been established by the 318 bishops at Nicaea. When, later, he attributes his knowledge of the end of the world to the teaching of the *priores* (*patres*), he is obviously referring to a group comparable to these Fathers of the Church.[160] He seems to be thinking of the same when he announces that, according to the authority of the Fathers, at the moment of Creation, God gave two great luminaries to the human spirit, that is, Christ and the Church.[161] Likewise, in his view, the *doctores ecclesiarum* are able to recognize and explain the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures when it has an allegorical sense.[162] And finally, the authority of the Fathers (*auctoritas patrum*) serves as grounds for the interdiction of Sunday labour (*VM* 3.55, 195) and for the institution of a period of fasting in the Church (*VP* 15.2, 272).[163] A good number of references in the *Histories* in fact concern the Church's work in establishing its own institutions through the canons, the *auctoritas canonum*, *statuta canonum*, *sanctio canonum*, but Gregory's interest in the ecclesiastical assemblies of his time was quite limited.[164] This lack of interest also seems to hold as regards the large theological questions of his time outside of Gaul itself.[165]

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160 *Hist.* 1, prol., 4, "De fine vero mundi ea sentio quae a prioribus didici," referring then to the coming of Antichrist, the introduction of circumcision, the raising of his statue in the temple of Jerusalem. Gregory's source is not clear. In *CD*, there are several chapters on Antichrist (e.g. 20.19), but without the other elements.

161 *VP* 18, prol., 283: after following Gen 1:16 ("Et fecit Deus duo luminaria magna"), he himself adds "et in illo mentis humanae caelo, sicut priorum sancxit auctoritas, luminaria magna dedit, Christum scilicet et eclesiam eius."

162 *VP* 9, prol., 252, concerning Ex 35:22 on the offerings to God's tabernacle: "Sed cum haec omnia doctores eclesiarum esse allegorica tradidissent et in reliquis donaris gratiarum genera demonstrassent, in illis caprarum pilis laudationum verba conparaverunt." Quite likely, the reference is to Jerome and the prologue to the *Liber Regum*, which Gregory knew: see Heinzelmann, "Réécriture," 16 n. 7; in fact, according to *GM* prol., 37, Jerome is "post apostolum Paulum bonus doctor eclesiae." In *Hist.* 5.44, Hilary of Poitiers and Eusebius of Vercelli are *doctores ecclesiae*, and Chilperic so qualifies Gregory himself (see above, n. 157).

163 On Sunday labour, see Wood, *Gregory of Tours* (Bangor, 1994), 29–32, for the miracles in a canonical context.

164 The canons are cited 23 times, the adjective *canonicus* 10 times; see *Concordance* (cited above, n. 56). In the hagiographic decade, there are 6 citations: *GC* 77 ("decreta canonum"), *VP* 6, prol. ("censura canonica"), *VP* 9.1 ("mensa canonica"), *VP* 12.3 ("congregatio canonica"), *GM* 85 (lecture from the "canon sacerdotalis"), and *VP* 17.2 (lecture from the "canon antiquus").

165 See Moreira, *Dreams* (above, n. 173), 106 with n. 97 (with bibliography).

Contrary to all the manifestations of human theology, there was, in Gregory's eyes, another 'theology,' endowed with a far superior value because emanating from Christ Himself. For it, Gregory uses the expression *dogma sanctae eclesiae*.[166] Gregory speaks of it in the prefaces to his collection *VP* in the sense of a profound belief or faith in the Church of Christ (the immaculate Church). One finds an illustration of it in the Life of Saint Monegonde, where he gives a summary of the Saviour's activity for his Church, ending with this affirmation about Christ: "Though we have been gravely wounded by the arrows of our sins... He mixed oil and wine and led us to the resting place of celestial medicine, that is to say, to the dogma of the Holy Church (*dogma sanctae eclesiae*). He exhorts us to live according to the example of the saints...."[167] Another preface has the same sense, when it stresses Christ's disparagement of those that will not take up their cross as being among those seeds of perpetual life "with which the heavenly Sower (*caelestis Sator*) has from the fountain of His divinity watered the field of the untutored soul with his precepts and fertilised it with His teaching (*dogma*)."[168] Gregory again uses the image of the heavenly Sower in *De cursu stellarum* to introduce Christ's words in Mark 4:26–28; the seeds of the harvest, Gregory says, are that which "the Lord, sower of the spiritual teaching, has transformed by parable in speaking of the profit of his words, which he sowed among peoples."[169] In keeping with the importance of the theme of Christ as source of spiritual nourishment (*spiritalis manna/ esca*), this same subject, particularly dear to Gregory, is frequently taken up in the *diapsalmata* of the treatise on the Psalter.[170]

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166   See also, in a sometimes identical sense, *doctrina*, above, n. 159. Other occurrences of *dogma*: *Hist.* 5.43 (the heretic Agila "inpugnare eclesiastica dogma coepit," and Gregory replies to him: "eclesiastica dogmata maculas"); *VJ* 47 (*dogma* in church readings of the Scriptures); *VM* 2.19 (Gregory: "nobis in eclesiasticum dogma versantibus"); *VP* 18, prol. (*dogmata* of the apostles); *GC* 56 (*dogmata* of saint Martin). For the term, little used at the time and with various meanings, see P. Walter, "Dogme," *Dictionnaire critique,* 344–348, esp. 344.

167   *VP* 19 prol., 286: "Qui nos gravium facinorum spiculis sauciatos...infuso mero oleique liquore, ad stabulum medicinae caelestis, id est eclesiae sanctae dogma, perduxit. Qui nos exemplis sanctorum vivere...cohortatur ."

168   *VP* 2, prol., 218; trans. James, 11: "inrigavit institutione vel dogmate fecundavit."

169   *CS* 11, 410: "Dominus spiritalis doctrinae sator."

170   *PT*, 425–7 and Salmon, *Tituli*, 138–148, *diaps.* 34: "(psalmus ostendit) Quod ipse [scil. Christus] nos spiritalibus armis muniat ac defendat"; 77: "Quod ipse populum spiritalis manna reficiat alimento"; 103: "Quod ipse panis vivus spiritaliter reficit ecclesiam"; 110: "Quod ipse spiritalem escam verbi sui famem patientibus largiatur"; 144: "Quod ipse nobis spiritalem escam tempore tribuat oportuno"; 147: "Quod ipse ecclesiam suam in pace spiritalis tritici repleat ubertate."

A *dogma* of this kind, proceeding directly from the sole authority of Christ, is of extreme importance to Gregory, because it furnishes the 'theological' backdrop and basis for all the phenomena of the sainthood of the Church of Christ, that is to say, all that pertains to the role of the saints and their relics, miracles, even the reading of hagiographical texts (see 9.5.3 *exempla sanctorum sequi*).[171] The management of this sainthood on earth, lacking an explicit justification in Scriptures, is, as a result, strictly reserved for the authority and judgment of the bishops. In the Christian society of the Latin West from the 5th/6th centuries onward, the heads of churches presented themselves in fact as the only spiritual judges of the phenomena connected with the holiness of the Church, which include visions, all practices of divination, prophecies, signs in the heavens, or even the *sortes biblicae* (or *sortes sanctorum*).[172] To go by his own testimony, Gregory made large use of the role of prophet-diviner, of translator, and of reader of manifestations of this kind emanating from the invisible Church.[173] From his youth onward, the young Gregory himself was highly receptive to visions, which prompted him, at the age of less than ten, to try to cure his seriously ailing father by imitating the model – prescribed by a vision – of the biblical books of Jesus Nave (Joshua) and then that of Tobit.[174]

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171   See also the prologue to the Life of Monegonde, *VP* 19 : "He (Christ) exhorts us to live after the example of the saints."

172   See Heinzelmann, "Éléments autobiographiques," and idem, "Sainteté"; Adriaan H. Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul* (Göttingen, 1994), 240–257; Nicole Zeddies, *Religio et sacrilegium. Studien zur Inkriminierung von Magie, Häresie und Heidentum, 4.-7. Jahrhundert*, Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe 3, 964 (Frankfurt a.M. 2003), 256–279.

173   Excellent pages in Zeddies, as in previous note; and see also Breukelaar, as in previous note; Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 181–91 (German ed., 158–165); Giselle de Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower. Studies of Imagination in the Works of Gregory of Tours* (Amsterdam, 1987); Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca, London, 2000), 81–107 ("Gregory of Tours – a visionary bishop"); Ch. Rohr, "Signa apparuerunt, quae aut regis obitum adnunciare solent aut regiones excidium: Naturerscheinungen und ihre 'Funktion' in der Historia Francorum Gregors von Tours," in *Naturkatastrophen,* (eds.) D. Groh et al. (Tübingen, 2003), 65–78; J. Keskiaho, "The Handling and Interpretation of Dreams and Visions in late Sixth- to Eighth-century Gallic and Anglo-Latin Hagiography and Histories," *Early Medieval Europe*, 13 (2005), 227–248; M. Becher, "Mantik und Prophetie in der Historiographie des frühen Mittelalters: Überlegungen zur Merowinger- und frühen Karolingerzeit," in *Mantik,* (ed.) Wolfram Hogrebe (Würzburg, 2005), 167–187.

174   *GC* 39, with the title: "De visionibus pro patris mei infirmitate." It is remarkable that the mother of a seven- to nine-year old did not hesitate to carry out all the instructions of these visions. For other visions of Gregory see my chapter on Gregory's biography in this volume (1.4, pp. 33–34).

Other visions encouraged him several times, through the apparition of his mother, to compose the books on the miracles of Saint Martin.[175] There is no doubt that, for him, these visions had the authority of revelations of the immaculate Church of Christ. In the *Histories,* he not only illustrated Hell and Paradise thanks to 'spiritual visits' by two of his contemporaries, but also used certain revelations to 'prove' the orthodox point of view to Jews and Arians.[176] The parallelism of two visions of the fate of the 'iniquitous' King Chilperic after his death in 584, one revealed to Gregory, the other to the 'good' King Guntram, corresponded, for the bishop of Tours, and for his historical writing, to divine condemnation of the Neustrian king and his anti-episcopal policy.[177]

Another important area for searching out of the will of God – besides the explanations sometimes given by Gregory of *signa et prodigia,* comets and other signs of nature – is divination by taking lots (s. *sors,* pl. *sortes*) from a book of the Holy Scriptures.[178] In this context, Nicole Zeddies refers to the model of the injunction heard by Augustin at his conversion, *tolle, lege*; in the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Augustine gives a very positive definition of the *sortes*: "for lot-taking is not something bad, but, when there is doubt in the human sphere, it indicates the divine will."[179] The *Histories* are full of examples of the licit or illicit use of this type of prophecy. Chapter 14 of Book 5 illustrates a whole range of cases. There is first the matter of an oracle a *phitonissa* (pytheness, seeress), assimilated to "lies of the devil" by our author, an oracle contradicted by a vision of Gregory's. The bishop also favoured Merovech, son of King Chilperic, with a biblical lot by consulting the book of Proverbs but it produced an unhappy outcome

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175   *VM* 1, prol. : "nisi bis et tertio admonitus fuissem per visum." See de Nie, *Views*, and esp. 298 ; Moreira, *Dreams*, 82–88, who also discusses other visions in his family (Saint Gall, his mother).

176   For the vision of Hell of the Arvernian abbot (*Hist.* 4.33), and that of Paradise by Saint Salvius, later bishop of Albi (*Hist.* 7.1), see Moreira, *Dreams*, 149–155. For the visions in support of orthodoxy, ibid., 99–105.

177   *Hist.* 8.5; see Moreira, *Dreams*, 95–99, who rightly notes that "the king was merely a vehicle, not an interpreter of dreams" (p. 95). See also Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 61f. and 188f. (German ed., 58f. and 164f.); de Nie, *Views*, 285–287; Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 128, 237.

178   On natural signs, see De Nie, *Views*, 71–132; Zeddies, *Religio*, 270–272; and Rohr, "Signa apparuerunt."

179   The injunction to "take up and read" led him to Rom. 13:13. Zeddies, *Religio*, 261–262. The commentary of Augustine for Ps. 30:16 ("In manibus tuis sortes meae") in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini, Enarrationes in Psalmos* (CCSL 38, Turnhout, 1990), 211: "Audito nomine sortium, non debemus sortilegos quaerere. Sors enim non aliquid mali est ; sed res est in dubitatione humana diuinam indicans voluntatem." He continues by giving examples of biblical *sortes*.

for the prince. After failing to understand the bearing of this first divine indica-
tion, Merovech then proceeded to the 'official' rite of the *sortes*, by placing a
Psalter, the books of Kings, and a Gospel on the tomb of Saint Martin, in order to
open them later, after a three-day spiritual preparation – results confirmed the
dismal message of Gregory's earlier reading.[180] Gregory himself also had recourse
to his Psalter in a quest for a consolatory verse when the persecutions of Count
Leudast in 580 placed him in acute personal distress.[181]

There can be no doubt that the ideas of Gregory of Tours concerning the
saints and miracles, visions, *sortes,* and the general signification of natural phe-
nomena are deeply anchored in the bishop's deep faith. Theologically, this faith
is intimately tied to the distinctive function of a Christ who is not only the
principium et finis of every Christian, but also, as Gregory says in the prologue
to the first book of the *Histories,* the end or purpose of his historiography.[182]
This passage, essential for the entire corpus, does not only represent the impor-
tance given to the divine in and for the history of man, but at the same time
advertises the method chosen for correctly deciphering divine interventions in
this history. I have treated the most striking examples in the *Histories* starting
with the prefaces of the three first books.[183] The person of Christ, and at the
same time the Church that forms His body, are undoubtedly the starting point
of all typological reading, a way of reading that tends to recognize in the Old
Testament period significant 'types' of a particular person or event of the period
ab incarnatione.[184] Christ, as such, can be the antitype of all the patriarchs and

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180   *Hist.* 5.14, 207–213. See Zeddies, *Religio*, 264–265; Becher, "Mantik," 169–170; Breukelaar,
       Historiography, 245f.

181   *Hist.* 5.49, 260, line 2–3, on learning of the arrest of his confidants Plato and Galienus:
       "mestus turbatusque ingressus oratorium, Davitici carminis sumo librum, ut scilicet aper-
       tus aliquem consolationis versiculum daret." He found verse Ps. 77:53. In *PT*, 427, he gave
       to Ps. 77 the significant *diapsalma* "quod ipse [Christus] populum spiritalis manna reficiat
       alimento."

182   See the Introduction, with n. 8.

183   See 9.3 above. For the importance of the first book of the *Histories* for Gregory's entire
       opus, see 9.3 and 9.4 (Christology I and II).

184   For Christ's body as the Church, *Tyconius, Le Livre des règles* (as in n. 52), rule I ("De Domino
       et corpore eius"), 1, 134–135: "Only reason may decide if the Scripture means the Lord or His
       body, which is the Church." For the use of Tyconius (or, following him, Augustine, *De doc-
       trina christiana* 3) by Gregory, see Heinzelmann, "Structures," *passim*, where I conclude
       that all seven rules were applied by Gregory. For typology, see P. Beauchamp, "Sens de
       l'Écriture," *Dictionnaire critique*, 1098–1103; R. Suntrup, "Typologie," *Historisches Wörterbuch
       der Rhetorik*, vol. 9 (Darmstadt, 2009), col. 841–846 (with bibliography); Heinzelmann,
       Gregory, 146–52 (German ed., 131–135); and idem, "Structures."

prophets who announce His coming just as the martyrs and saints who represent Him in the Christian epoch are bearers of His *typus*.[185] The Church, created and promised at the time of the creation of Adam (*Hist*. 1.1), will be fulfilled a first time by the coming of Christ and, definitively, by the Last Judgment. Ever since Ambrose and Augustine, this reference system most often comprises the three stages that are the period of the Law (the Old Testament), of the time of Christ, and eschatological time.[186]

This typological thinking is present everywhere in the first book of the *Histories*, applied in an explanatory and pedagogical fashion. It is this thinking that explains Gregory's predilection – like that of other 5th- and 6th-century theologians, beginning again with Augustine – for the Psalter as the book of prophecies about the Church and its future accomplishments.[187] This predilection also explains the large number of psalm citations in Gregory's work. Sixteen percent of the identified citations of the entire corpus come from the Psalter, without taking account of the *diapsalmata* of the 150 psalms and the brief commentary of *PT*.[188] Also significant is the piling up of psalm citations in books with a highly 'theological' content, such *VP* and the eschatological Book 10 of the *Histories*.[189] Taken as a whole, the biblical citations drawn from

185   On the announcement of his coming, *Hist*. 1.16, 15: "Dominus patriarcharum prophetarum vocebus repromissus"; also *Hist*. 5.11, 205. Gregory uses the term *propheta/profeta* 58 times in his works, 44 times in the *Histories*; see Heinzelmann, "Structures," 590.

186   Suntrup, "Typologie," col. 844; Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 146–52 (German ed., 131–135) with a diagram of this distribution, starting with Book 1 of the *Histories*.

187   Heinzelmann, "Psalmen," and idem, "Psautier," 773–5. See especially *PT* and its *diapsalmata*, which all are treated as prophecies about Christ in reference to the Church. For Augustine and the Psalms, see *supra*, n. 93.

188   Our summary of biblical citations from Gregory's work is based on the identifications of the editor Krusch in the volumes of the MGH SRM; of P. Antin, "Notes sur le style de saint Grégoire de Tours et ses emprunts (?) à Philostrate," idem, *Recueil sur saint Jérôme*, Coll. Latomus 95 (Bruxelles, 1968), 419–437; and of Heinzelmann, "Psautier." The volume of the two decades of the work is close to the same: according to the lines of the edition, the ten books of the *Hist*. constitute 50.2% of the whole text, as against 49.8% for the hagiographic books (*PT* being fragmentary).

189   Of the 394 citations of the OT, 80 are from the psalms, 9 for *VP*, 10 for the eschatological *Hist*.10 (with 5 explicit citations in 10.13 alone), and 12 for *Hist*. 2 (exemplary history of Clovis). The applied scheme of promises and fulfillments also corresponds to the citation of the prophetic books: 12 for *Hist*. 10, and 11 for *Hist*. 2 (out of a total of 62), whereas there are only 8 for all the 10 hagiographic books! The citations from the psalms are overtaken only by those of the Matthew gospel, with 89 citations (44 in the *Histories* 45 hagiographic), followed by Kings with 65 citations (56 in the *Histories*, and only 9 in the hagiographic decade), and John with 64 (37/27).

the Old Testament (OT: 394 identified citations) exceed those of the New Testament (NT: 359 citations), which are however in the majority (146 to 73) in the nine hagiographic books (obviously without *PT*).[190] This is in perfect agreement with the identification of the saints as 'types' of Christ.

With a very deliberate economy of scriptural citations, Gregory's typological thought also manifests itself in the appropriate use of a characteristic vocabulary. Although Gregory limits the term *tipus/ typus* to the first book of the *Histories*, and speaks of 'allegorical' interpretation only once, he regularly uses *spiritalis* and *spiritaliter* in referring to the spiritual sense.[191] Thus he states in *PT* that the psalm verses "which report facts according to a literal sense, contain, as one knows, the truth of the spiritual sense."[192] The essential prophetical dimension that has already been discussed is evoked in the 58 times that the term *propheta/profeta* is used, replaced from time to time by *vates*, *oracula*, or *vaticinia*.[193] To the fulfillment of the prophecies or promises of God, there correspond the verbs *con-/complere* ("ut veterum vatum conplerentur oracula," *Hist.* 1.20, 17), or *in-/implere* ("impletumque est illud apostoli," *GM* 77, 90).[194]

A considerable number of typological terms in Gregory's works, such as *figurare*, *significare*, *(e)docere*, *demonstrare*, concern the spiritual meaning, or, as in the case of *percipere* and the very frequent *intellegere*, they concern the understanding of the mystical truths of things.[195] By far the most significant, however, are the terms *manifestare* and especially *ostendere* ('show,' 'make understandable,' 'prove'), which in some way summarize Gregory's entire typological theology: "God the Father had no recourse but to send His Son to earth to reveal the presence of God ("ut ostenderit Deum")" (*Hist.* 6.40, 311). He shows

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190   In the *Histories*, 321 citations are from the OT and 213 from the NT. In the hagiographic books (always without *PT*) 73 citations are from the OT and 146 from the NT.

191   See Heinzelmann, "Structures," 588–589, and ibid. n. 81 for "spiritalis"; above, n. 162, for "allegorica." See also P. Beauchamp, "Sens de l'Écriture," *Dictionnaire critique*, 1098–99, for "Allégorie," "Sens typique ou figuré," and "Sens spirituel."

192   *PT*, 424: "Illi sane qui res gestas secundum litteram narrant veritatem spiritalis intelligentiae cognoscuntur habere."

193   See above, 9.5.2, discussion of *PT*; further, Heinzelmann, "Structures," 590–591; the verbs in this context are *vaticinari*, *praedicare/praedicere*, *pronuntiare*, and *praevidere*.

194   See also the same formula in *GM* 87, 97: "impletumque est illud Salomonis proverbium"; or *GC* 22, 311: "impletumque est illud quod psalmographus…cantavit" etc., most often followed by a citation.

195   Heinzelmann, "Structures," 588–593. On *percipere* and *intelligere*, *Hist.* 6.40, 311: "Nam tu, qui Paulo apostolo derogas et sensum eius non intellegis, percipe, quam caute loquitur…" There are 94 occurrences of the forms of the term *intellegere*, as e.g., *Hist.* 1.10, 10: "Quas nos divisiones spiritaliter et non secundum littera intellegere oportit."

his Deity through the enriching gift of nature's marvels ("in locupletatione ostenduntur muneris," *cs* 9, 410) and his power by the creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars ("in ostensione proferuntur virtutis," ibid.). In this task, and to confirm the promises of the prophets, Christ produces miracles at the graves of his saints: "virtutem magnam ostendit," and "multa miracula ostendit."[196] Each *diapsalma* of the Treatise on the Psalms includes the word *ostendit* as proof that everything refers to Christ and His Church, *ostenderit Deum*, an expression that governs each line of Gregory's work, whether it be hagiographic or historiographic.

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196   Heinzelmann, "Structures," 591–592. The formula occurs 37 times in the corpus, and 27 times in associating *virtus/ miraculum* with the word *manifestare*.

Gregory of Tours and the Literary Imagination: Genre, Narrative Style, Sources, and Models in the *Histories*

Joaquín Martínez Pizarro

10.1   Introduction

For centuries, Gregory of Tours was read out of a historical and not a literary interest. As a source of information on Frankish Gaul in the sixth century he was irreplaceable, but the standards of taste created by an education based exclusively on the classics made perusal of his work a tedious occupation at best.[1] The 19th-century enthusiasm for him as the great historian of the barbarians, as well as the mid 20th-century rediscovery by Auerbach, who presented his work as a vibrant new beginning made possible by the ignorance of proper Latin syntax, both left behind an image of Gregory as a not very literary figure, a sort of *naïf* of letters who had stumbled upon greatness either because he had very ancient and very precious information to hand down, or because he was forced by his limited culture to draw on a startling personal gift for narrative.[2]

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1   Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* chapter 38 note 111 (vol. 3, London, 1781; David Womersley (ed.), 2: 487), "Decedente atque immo potius pereunte ab urbibus Gallicanis liberalium culturâ litterarum, &c. [Gregory *Hist.* praef.], is the complaint of Gregory himself, which he fully verifies by his own work. His style is equally devoid of elegance and simplicity....I have tediously acquired, by a painful perusal, the right of pronouncing this unfavourable sentence."

2   Barbarians: see Jean-Jacques Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France avant le douzième siècle* (Paris 1839; reprinted 1974), 2: 292: "La barbarie devait avoir son historien; elle était un trop grand événement pour ne pas être racontée. L'histoire naît toujours quand il y a lieu; quand

The literary study of Gregory has come a long way since the publication of Auerbach's *Mimesis* , and today most scholars in the field tend to see the bishop of Tours' writings as artful and deliberate productions. This realization also makes Gregory seem less reliable as a source of factual knowledge, and it generates many questions about his basic conception and design, particularly in the *Histories*. These matters are too numerous to address in an essay like the present one. The following pages will be limited to the *Histories*, leaving aside Gregory's hagiography except where it impinges directly on his most famous work. They will also avoid all questions generated by interpretations of Gregory's spirituality, theology, and political ideas. Instead, the focus will be on what arises from the text itself, i.e. on qualities and features superficial enough that there can be a measure of agreement about them.

10.2   Genre

To grasp Gregory's aims as a narrator, we must establish what kind of narrative he chose to work in. He wrote history, as his title, the content of his work, and the references to Sallust, Orosius, and other historians make fairly clear, but the eccentric appearance of the *Histories*, with its syncopated and highly heterogeneous sequence of chapters and its shifting time-scale that covers centuries in the early books and single years or even months in the later ones, makes it seem unclassifiable. We have had a convincing answer to the question since 1987, when an article by K.F. Werner proposed the Christian genre of *historia*, inaugurated by the early

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la réalité est forte, elle trouve toujours où se réfléchir. L'histoire se suscite en quelque sorte l'expression qui lui convient." Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton 1953), 90: "But, [unlike Petronius], Gregory has nothing to hand except his grammatically confused, syntactically impoverished, and almost sophomoric Latin; he has no stops to pull, as he has no public he might impress with an unfamiliar excitant, a new variant of style. But he does have the concrete events that take place around him; he witnesses them or he hears them 'fresh from the oven,' and in a vernacular which, though he may be unable to form a completely clear idea of it, is obviously always present to his ear as the raw material of his story while he labors to translate it back into his semi-literary Latin." Some twelve years after writing these lines, Auerbach has this to add in his *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton 1965), 111: "His models – if the term is permissible – were probably ecclesiastical and above all Biblical…But whatever he may have learned comes to life through contact with concrete events and the spoken language of the time, of which unfortunately we know little more than what we can infer from the written language that Gregory made of it."

5th-century *History Against the Pagans* of Orosius, which Gregory would have been the first writer to choose for a model.[3] Like Orosius, Gregory divided his work into books and chapters, started out from the biblical creation, and gave his narrative the scope of a world history, however poorly equipped he may have been to write one. As in Orosius, emperors and kings are the protagonists of history, and judged by moralistic and explicitly Christian standards. Though this is a persuasive answer in the matter of genre, it leaves many problems unsolved, and it is easy to understand that Werner, in his original article should have made little of Gregory's place in a tradition that according to him, stretches from Orosius to Otto of Freising.[4] In fact, the two histories are so different that it is not surprising that the *Histories* should have been read for centuries as a sort of memoir of the author's own times in Merovingian Gaul . Unlike Orosius, who had access to some classical historians, but chiefly to *compendia* of history, such as those of Justinus and Eutropius, which enabled him to frame an account of Roman history with sufficient information on Greeks, Persians, and other ancient nations, Gregory, after a very modest 'universal' introduction in Book 1, was quick to zero in on the region of central Gaul with which he was familiar. His ambition to write world history is attested only by his sparse but systematic references to Visigothic Spain, Italy, and the eastern empire, which, however modest, run through the entire work.[5]

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3   See K.F. Werner, "Gott, Herrscher und Historiograph. Der Geschichtsschreiber als Interpret des Wirken Gottes in der Welt und Ratgeber der Könige (4. b 12. Jahrhundert)," in *Devs qvi mvtat Tempora. Menschen und Institutionen im Wandel des Mittelalters, Festschrift für Alfons Becker zu seinem fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag,* (*eds.*) Ernst-Dieter Hehl, Hubertus Seibert, and Franz Staab (Sigmaringen 1987), 1–31. For the impact of Werner's thesis, see Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge 2001), 104–107. The influence of Orosius on the historians of the 5th to the 9th centuries is traced in J.N. Hillgarth, "The *Histories* of Orosius in the Early Middle Ages," in *De Tertullien aux mozarabes* 2, *Antiquité tardive et christianisme ancien* (*vie – ixe siècles*), *Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine membre de l'Institut à l'occasion de son 70e anniversaire*, Louis Holtz and Jean-Claude Fredouille, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Moyen-âge et Temps Moderne 26 (Paris 1992), 157–170. Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (*A.D. 550–800*): *Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton 1988) does not list Werner's article in its bibliography, but calls Gregory "the first historian since Orosius" (117), in contrast to G. Vinay, *San Gregorio de Tours* (*Saggio*) (Carmagnola 1940), 77, who, in stressing Gregory's dominant interest in the passions and struggles of his contemporaries, adds in passing: "la concezione teologica di un Orosio e mile miglia lontana."

4   Werner, "Gott, Herrscher und Historiograph," 15 n. 43.

5   These references must be connected to the interests of the Merovingian dynasty and especially the Austrasians, with their policy of Spanish alliances, and to the military interventions

Another circumstance that obscures the very real analogy of the two works is that Orosius' *History* was written as part of the same anti-pagan polemic that generated Augustine's *City of God*. It is therefore strongly centered on the history of pagan Rome and introduces Christianity only in its seventh and last book. Gregory, to whom that polemic meant little, writes in a Christianized world and ends the first of his ten books with the death of Martin of Tours in a Christian Gaul. He is not attempting to justify the new religion, and this allows him to choose a central argument that places the focus of his narrative very far from that of Orosius: though kings play central roles throughout the *Histories*, they do not rule alone, but must share power with the bishops. The harmony and disharmony of church and state that stand at the center of his account make necessary the shifting narrative structure of the *Histories*, with its alternating coverage of miracles and slaughters, secular and ecclesiastical affairs. Orosius, on the other hand, has nothing to say about this subject, and does not mention even the epoch-making confrontations of the emperor Theodosius with Ambrose of Milan.

In making this theme, absent in Orosius, his main subject, Gregory draws on a tradition already present in Gaul and familiar to him. Sulpicius Severus, whose *Vita Martini* he was well acquainted with, presents the dealings of his prototypical bishop/monk with the secular powers, and in particular with the usurper Maximus, in the light of what Jacques Fontaine has called 'prophetic typology,' a narrative strategy by which bishops in their confrontations with rulers are made to echo the prophets and 'men of God' of the Old Testament as they hand out advice or reproof to the kings of the Jews.[6] We should not forget that the attitudes of the Old Testament historians to the institution of kingship adopted by the Jews against the will of God in order be "like all the other nations" (1 Samuel 8.5) was highly critical, and that their prophets most often come on stage to denounce Saul, David, Solomon, and their successors. Gregory was at home in this typology and used it in some of his saints' lives in the *Vita Patrum* and, more impressively, in the *Histories*, where Bishop Salvius of Albi rejects angrily Chilperic's doctrinal innovations (*Hist.* 5.44) and predicts the

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against the Lombards which their agreements with the Byzantine emperors engaged them to carry out. Cf. cc. 13 and 14 below.

6   See Sulpice Sévère, *Vie de Saint Martin* 3. (ed.) Jacques Fontaine, Sources Chrétiennes 135 (Paris 1969), 913–946, esp. 916 note 3, and also Jacques Fontaine, "Une clé littéraire de la *Vita Martini* de Sulpice Sévère: la typologie prophétique," *Mélanges offerts a Mademoiselle Christine Mohrmann* (Utrecht/Anvers 1963), 84–95. On the general subject of the literary representation of state/church relations, see also Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, "Images of Church and State: From Sulpicius Severus to Notker Balbulus," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 4 (1994), 25–38.

death of his children (*Hist.* 5.50), or where Praetextatus of Rouen confronts a Jezebel-like Fredegund (*Hist.* 8.31).[7] But Gregory's picture of the relations between altar and throne has evolved considerably, and no longer reflects a dominant attitude of disapproval on the part of the church. His bishops now collaborate with the state as far as possible, serve in secular capacities as envoys, judges, or administrators, and often display a keen appreciation of their high position in the hierarchy of government. The rare vestiges of the early Christian suspicion of secular power can be found in their practice of liberating captives with no regard to innocence or guilt, and in their obstinate defense of the right of asylum.[8] While Gregory's bishops can be exemplary, many of them have been corrupted by power, and the *Histories* document their abuses and scandalous behavior in detail, from the inebriated bishop Eunius of Vannes, who collapses at the altar with a sound like a horse neighing (*Hist.* 5.40) to the brother bishops Salonius of Embrun and Sagittarius of Gap, criminals and drunkards who break their routine of debauchery only to participate in warfare and political intrigue (*Hist.* 4.42 and 5.20) to the arch-plotter and traitor Egidius of Rheims, who is eventually deposed and exiled (*Hist.* 10.19). Gregory shows a strong sense of the deference that is owed to the episcopal office in itself, but his picture of the church of his times is in no way idealized.

Though Orosian, then, Gregory's *Histories* is radically different from the *History Against the Pagans*, which is probably why it took scholars so long to recognize the connection. The contents of the two books are hardly related. Where Orosius, writing with a polemical purpose handed him by Augustine, compiles a record of military and other disasters under paganism, Gregory, with a different point to prove, presents the history of Christian Gaul in terms of the proper collaboration between church and state, from Clovis' courtesy to the bishops in attempting to retrieve the 'vase de Soissons' (*Hist.* 2. 27) to King Guntram's bishop-like behavior and alleged miracles (*Hist.* 9.21).[9] More than a

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7   In the *VP*, see especially in the *vita* of Lupicinus and Romanus, the encounter of the former with a king of the Burgundians (216–217), and in that of Nicetius of the Treveri, the bishop's open clash with King Theudebert (279–280), of whom Gregory nevertheless gives a highly positive account in *Hist.* 3.25.

8   Possibly most significant is the case of the recluse Eparchius in *Hist.* 6.8 who sends a monk to demand of the count of Angouleme that he free a captive condemned to death, "ut scilicet culpabilis ille vitae concederetur" (278). A telling episode concerning the right of asylum is *Hist.* 9.12, which describes the killing or lynching of the conspirator Berthefred while he is staying in the church-house of Verdun in the custody of Bishop Ageric. The bishop is so deeply offended by this incident that he later (*Hist.* 9.23) dies of depression and shock.

9   On Gregory's account of Guntram and the agenda behind it, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 60–75 and 184–191, and A.H.B. Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in*

real generic model, Orosian *historia* may be said to have provided Gregory with a format. The chief function of this format is to strengthen the unity and continuity of the *Histories*. Such strengthening is made necessary by the difference between Books 1 to 4, which cover thousands of years and include a preface to the work as a whole and prologues to Books 1, 2, and 3, in which Gregory addresses his readers, and Books 5 to 10, which narrate sixteen years of recent history in annalistic form, with only Book 5 opening with a prologue (addressed to the rulers of Frankish Gaul) and with Gregory himself appearing frequently as a character in the narrative.[10] There is also at the very end of Book 4 an elaborate calculation of the years from Creation, which would appear to mark the conclusion of what had been at first conceived as an independent book, though it does not appear to have circulated in that form.[11] Whether the markers of *historia* were added to Books 1 to 4 in the course of a revision of the entire text late in Gregory's life or they were present from the start, they have not succeeded in covering up the discontinuity of the text at this point, which is still conspicuous. Kings and bishops, however, in amity and conflict, are present in both halves of the *Histories*, as are the author's limited efforts to give universal or global scope to his story.

10.3 Narrative Style

Though genre is capable of conveying ideology it does not impose an ideology of its own on the individual author, witness Orosius and Gregory, who, though using the same generic formula, carry very different, almost wholly unrelated views by means of it. One of the most distinctive features of Gregory's format, the alternation of religious and secular subject-matter, is chosen to embody in the narrative this fundamental aspect of the author's conception. Where genre

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Sixth-Century Gaul: The Histories of Gregory of Tours Interpreted in their Historical Context. Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 57 (Göttingen 1994), 238–240, as well as the radically different interpretation of G. Halsall, "Nero and Herod? The Death of Chilperic and Gregory's Writing of History," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden 2002), 337–350.

10   In this sense, the prologue to Book 5 works as a hinge between the two sections of the *Histories*. On the structure and rhetoric of this preface, see now G. Halsall, "The Preface to Book v of Gregory of Tours' *Histories*: Its Form, Context, and Significance," *English Historical Review* 123/496 (April 2007), 297–317.

11   See on this subject Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 114–115. On the actual dates of composition, see however Alexander Callander Murray, "Chronology and the Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1/1 (2008), 157–196.

manifests itself as structure, style, however, and even narrative style, can be best described as texture. The narrative style of a particular author may have its parts in no necessary order, but pervades the text entirely; it is, if not uniform, at least homogeneous, the same combination of the same elements from beginning to end. Since these elements can be understood as rhetorical devices, it would be possible to think of narrative style as ideologically neutral and only more or less effective artistically. The case of Gregory's *Histories* suggests that this is not necessarily true: Gregory's distinguishing feature is the scenic style, the effect of which is a vivid representation that allows readers to feel that they are witnessing the events an author describes. Unfortunately, the persistent characterization of the bishop of Tours as an artless narrator who records events as they happen and with an uncultivated storytelling gift manages to bring 6th-century Gaul to life erases the literary craft and design behind Gregory's picture of his times. The history that 'comes alive before our eyes' is also an ideology, one that equates vividness with historical truth. This conclusion is strongly supported by Gregory's systematic portrayal of himself as naïve and poorly educated. His narrative manner is remarkably homogeneous and pervasive, extending to episodes he could not possibly have witnessed, such as the Visigothic prince Hermenegild's surrender to his father Leovigild, in the course of which the initially kind and encouraging gestures of the king are followed by an agreed-upon sign to his followers to arrest the prince, after which Hermenegild is seized, dressed in rags, and sent off into exile without a slave to serve him (*Hist.* 5.38).

Auerbach, in his pioneering and insightful account of Gregory's scenic narrative, the first critical attempt to present him as an important stylist,[12] focused his analysis on the bishop's talent in selecting or inventing concrete details and on his use of direct discourse. To these traits later scholarship has added some sense of the role that gestures, movements, and symbolic objects can play in animating the scenic frame, as well as the realization that these elements, however ordinary they may seem (urinating horses, the boot lost by a fleeing horseman), are also often coded and figural, allowing the narrator to make an abstract point while keeping an appearance of realistic banality.[13]

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12   He had, however, a noteworthy predecessor in Siegmund Hellmann, "Studien zur mittel-alterlichen Geschichtsschreibung 1. Gregor von Tours," *Historische Zeitschrift* 107 (1911), 1–43; and see especially 13–16.

13   See Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, *A Rhetoric of the Scene: Dramatic Narrative in the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1989), especially chapter 3 ("Gestures"), 109–169, though the analysis extends to other early medieval writers.

The scenic frame in itself represents essentially a shift in narrative time, whereby narrative rhythm, notoriously rapid in historical prose, slows down (however conventionally) to the pace of reality itself, which is allowed to unfold before us with authenticating unnecessary speeches and trivial details that create a 'reality effect.'[14] The time-frame that opens up with the scene has at its center a piece of 'reality' which it privileges and to which it adds significance and even symbolic force. In his discussion, Auerbach gives priority to the use of direct speech in this position, which is particularly important because Gregory, by freeing speech from the need to be eloquent in the classical sense, increased its expressive potential considerably and allowed it to take on a variety of stylistic and expressive registers. We should keep in mind, however, that speeches constitute by far the most frequent way to create a scene in Gregory's narrative, and that many scenes in the *Histories* consist of a single speech and nothing else. Also, aside from Gregory's recorded debates with heretics and a Jew, which convey the back-and-forth of argument at some length, most likely made possible by the fact that the reasoning used on either side had long been available in polemical literature, there is little real dialogue in his scenes, most of which frame a single speech or communication, and a response. Finally, Gregory's taste for presenting action (including verbal action) as customary, as something a character *used* to do or to say, qualifies the scenic status of many of his speeches and perhaps explains why they are often presented with no accompanying details. This is, for instance, how Chilperic speaks his famous words on the power of bishops, which Gregory held against him so bitterly: "'Look! Our fisc has been left poor,' he often used to say, 'and our wealth has been transferred to the churches'" (*Hist*. 6.46).[15] Gestures and props, on the other hand, can be rarely made to look habitual and acquire a special depth of meaning when placed at the center of a scene. So, for instance, the piece of rope with which Duke Dracolen threatens Guntram Boso when the latter is trying to remove his daughters from Poitiers: "Dracolen, who was boastful and silly, answered, 'Look at the rope with which I have led other culprits bound before the king. With this same rope, Guntram shall today be tied up and taken

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14   See Roland Barthes, "L'effet de réel," *Communications* 11 (1968), 84–89, reprinted in Barthes, *Le bruissement de la langue*, *Essais critiques IV* (Paris, 1984), 167–174.

15   "Aiebat enim plerumque: 'Ecce pauper remansit fiscus noster, ecce divitiae nostra ad eclesias sunt translatae (320).'" Here as elsewhere, it is the past imperfect of the verb of enunciation that makes the speech sound customary. English renderings in the text are mostly taken from the translation by Murray; passages not covered by Murray's translation are quoted from Thorpe unless otherwise indicated.

bound to the same king'" (*Hist.* 5.25).[16] The rope, brought to the attention of the readers in Dracolen's own words, comes to stand for his claim to power and for his foolishness. A scene that, like this one, combines direct speech with other dramatic elements, may be considered fully developed, a distinct moment in narrative time. But such scenes are less frequent than might appear, which reveals a limitation of Auerbach's account.

Most narratives in the *Histories*, and this includes episodes that occupy single chapters, consist of more than one *potential* scene. But in a sequence of potential scenes, few are realized. The well-known story of Attalus' escape from captivity (*Hist.* 3.15) which, having been handed down for decades in Gregory's family, must have developed a well-rounded dramatic form by the time it got to him,[17] breaks down into a series of speeches and exchanges of single speeches now and then punctuated by eloquent images that are not always the focus of a dramatized moment. One more fully realized incident occurs halfway through the story, when Leo, the cook who has come to rescue his master's nephew from the barbarian who holds him for ransom, after serving a year in the man's home to win his trust, reveals to the young captive that the time for their escape has come: " He [i.e. Leo] went one day into a meadow which was near the house, together with Attalus, the slave who had charge of the horses. The two of them lay down on the grass, some distance apart, with their backs to each other, so that no one could see that they were talking to each other. 'The time has come,' said Leo to the young man, 'for us to be thinking of going home. Listen to what I say. Tonight, when you have brought the horses in and shut them in the stable, make sure that you don't fall asleep. Be ready as soon as I give you the word, and we will set off on our journey'."[18] The open meadow and the contrived physical attitude of the characters bring home to us the necessary secrecy of the occasion and the dangers that surround Leo and Attalus in this foreign household. The single speech gives us a sense of the decisiveness and authority assumed by Leo, who at this point is still a slave both to the barbarian and to Attalus' uncle, but who must act as the leader of the enterprise. The successful end of their adventure is reduced to a single, deeply expressive

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16   At ille, ut erat vanus ac levis: 'Ecce,' inquid, funiculum in quo alii culpabiles legati ad regem me ducente directi sunt, in quo et hic hodie legandus illuc educitur vinctus'" (231).

17   See Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, "A Brautwerbung Variant in Gregory of Tours: Attalus' Escape from Captivity," *Neophilologus* 62 (1978), 109–118.

18   "Post anni vero curriculum…abiit in pratum, qui erat domi proximus, cum Attalo puero, custode equorum, et decubans in terram cum eo a longe, aversis dorsis, ut non cognuscerentur, quod loquerentur simul, dicit puero: 'Tempus est enim, ut iam cogitare de patria debeamus. Ideoque moneo te, ut hac nocte, cum equos ad claudendum adduxeris, sopore non depraemaris, sed, cum primum te vocitavero, adsis et ambulemus. (113–114)'."

gesture: "Then they went on again and were brought before Saint Gregory [of Langres]. The Bishop was delighted when he saw them both. He wept on the neck of his nephew Attalus."[19] Highly effective, should it be considered a scene too? In any case, it points to a second characteristic of Gregory's scenic narrative: its minimalism. Just as only a few parts of the sequence are developed as scenes, that development itself is limited to the fewest possible elements: a speech, a gesture, rarely a combination of both. More elaborate staging is rare, and remains within the boundaries of a strict narrative economy. The remarkable confrontation between Chilperic and Gregory over the fate of Praetextatus of Rouen (*Hist.* 6.46), very much an instance of 'le prophète chez le roi,'[20] begins when Gregory, as leader of the opposition to the king's persecution of Praetextatus, is summoned to Chilperic's presence. The setting for this private encounter, which includes two bishops closely connected to the king, is briefly sketched: "When I arrived, the king was standing beside a bower made of branches; on his right stood Bishop Bertram and on his left Ragnemod. There was a table covered with bread and various dishes before them."[21] The relaxed and intimate nature of this stage conflicts with the evident purpose of the summons, which is wholly political: Chilperic intends to put pressure on Gregory and make him side with the royal initiative against his fellow prelate, or at least to persuade him to stop voicing his opposition. After exchange of four fairly brief speeches on the subject – in which Gregory has the last word – an additional element is introduced, a gesture that involves an object made symbolic by its very position: "Thinking that I did not understand his artfulness, he turned to the broth that was set in front of him, as if this would soothe me. 'I had this broth prepared for you,' he said. 'There is nothing else in it but

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19   "…et sic usque ad sanctum Gregorium perlati sunt. Gavisus autem pontifex visis pueris, flevit super collum Attali, nepotis sui"(116). As Krusch-Levinson point out in the margin of their edition, the gesture refers to Jacob's reunion with Joseph in Egypt: "vidensque eum, irruit super collum eius, et inter amplexus flevit." (Gen. 46.29).

20   See above note 7, as well as P. Courcelle, "Trois dîners chez le roi wisigoth d'Aquitaine," *Revue des études anciennes* 49 (1947), 169–177, reprinted as appendix VII to P. Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*, 3rd edition (Paris 1964), 339–347, as well as Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, "The King Says No: On the Logic of Type-Scenes in Late Antique and Early Medieval Narrative," in J.R. Davis and M. McCormick (eds.) *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies* (Ashgate 2008), 181–192.

21   "Cumque venissem, stabat rex iuxta tabernaculum ex ramis factum, et ad dexteram eius Berthchramus episcopus, ad laevam vero Ragnemodus stabat; et erat ante eos scamnum pane desuper plenum cum diversis fercolis" (219). Bertram was bishop of Bordeaux and Ragnemod of Paris.

fowl and a few chickpeas'." But Gregory refuses all sharing of food or wine unless the king will take an oath to do justice, and in refusing he refers to Chilperic's invitation as "partaking of the pleasures of these delicacies," creating an opposition between the offered broth and the proper food of a bishop, which is doing the will of God.[22] The broth comes to stand for the temptation to yield to secular power in its injustice, and the scene, which ends with Chilperic taking the oath and Gregory condescending to accept a cup of wine, manages to convey a whole lesson in the proper relation of the powers with a striking paucity of means. Even so, it is exceptionally elaborate in relation with the rest of the *Histories*, which offers few comparable episodes.

The basic principle of Gregory's narrative style should not be described, therefore, as turning episodes into series of miniature scenes, but rather as a selective handling of the action, suggesting its scenic potential throughout by means of well chosen single elements (a speech, an object, a bit of action) and staging only a few moments of the sequence as fully realized scenes. This treatment requires great narrative talent and produces striking results. One last example will confirm its efficacy. An incident in Book 10 (*Hist.* 10.27) concerns an intervention of Fredegund in Tournai to bring to an end the feud between two Frankish families. The motives of the feud are summarized sparing all details, as are the queen's unavailing efforts to get the parties to see reason. Finally, she offers a banquet to bring them all together. "She invited many guests to a feast and had three of these people sit on the same bench." Gregory adds that a great deal of drinking went on, until most of the guests' attendants were sleeping in the corners of the room. "At that point, as the woman had arranged, three of her men with axes stepped up behind the three occupying the same bench. They were talking together as the hands of the queen's retainers swung their axes, in one movement, as I would say, striking the three men down and ending the banquet."[23] Of the whole incident, only this simple physical fact is brought before our imagination: that the three men were seated together while Fredegund's executioners struck them from behind. But the detail is made sharply memorable by framing, which brings the entire chapter

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22 "At illi quasi me demulcens, quod dolose faciens putabat me non intellegere, conversus ad iuscellum, quod coram eo erat positus, ait: 'Propter te haec iuscella paravi, in qua nihil aliud praeter volatilia et parumper ciceris continetur'" (220). Gregory refuses "in his diliciis dilectare."

23 "Invitatis etenim ad epulum multis, hos in unum tres fecit sedere subsellium;…Tunc ordinate a muliere viri cum tribus securibus a tergo horum trium adsteterunt, illisque conloquentibus, in unum, ut ita dicam, adsultu puerorum manus libratae, hominibus perculsis, ab epulo est discessum"(520).

to life even though no speeches are used. The eloquent picture of the three ready hands behind the three oblivious heads conveys a powerful sense of the combined premeditation and ferocity that characterize Fredegund's violence.

In writing that this detail, like so many others, is brought before our imagination, my intention is to stress that Gregory's narrative is not visual.[24] When Auerbach, and Hellmann before him, insist on the sensory character of Gregory's imagination, what they have in mind is the impact of Gregory's technique on the imagination of the reader.[25] Gregory points out this or that, but he hardly ever describes; precisions about size, shape, position, color are almost entirely missing from his pages, where the emphasis lies on the meaning of the elements selected for the scene, and on their role in the action.

The sequence of chapters, with its constant change of rhythm and narrative method, defines the formal complexity of the *Histories*. Gregory is fully aware of this and leaves the reader in no doubt about it by claiming the lists of chapter-titles as his own work: "I have set out the chapter-headings in proper order" (*Hist.* Praef.).[26] And yet the chapters as constitutive units, in their conspicuous variety, have hardly been studied.[27] Their length can go from the single-sentence notice that Theuderic betrothed his son to a Langobardic princess (*Hist.* 3.20), or an equally brief account of a giant found among the servants of the late Mummolus (*Hist.* 7.41) to the lengthy and richly dramatized narrative of the trial of Bishop Praetextatus in Paris (*Hist.* 5.18) or that of Gregory himself at Berny-Rivière (*Hist.* 5.49). The criteria of relevance that would have determined the inclusion of these particular incidents and the relative fullness of their treatment are difficult to establish.

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24   See Pizarro, *A Rhetoric of the Scene*, 133–138, 196, 204. Exceptions are exceedingly rare. The most salient one is, not surprisingly, Gregory's careful account of an unprecedented pattern of beams of light in the sky, possibly ominous, in *Hist.* 8.17.

25   Hellmann, "Studien zur mittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibung I," 13–14: "Alles ist bei ihm Leben und Bewegung, alles geht aus den unmittelbaren Anschauung des Schriftstellers und seinen Eindrücken hervor. Gregor sieht die Szenen, die er stellt, und die Menschen, die er in ihnen autreten lässt, leben." Auerbach, *Mimesis* (trans. Trask), 87: "What he related he tried to make visual, palpable, perceptible through all the senses." Both scholars, however, place the use of direct speech first among Gregory's tools for dramatizing narrative.

26   "…cuius capitula deursum subieci" (p. (1)).

27   The exceptions are Vinay, *San Gregorio di Tours*, 67–71, and Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours* (trans. Carroll, 115–119. Vinay argues persuasively that the order of the chapters is basically chronological in spite of a few flashbacks and related news items after which Gregory will write "But let us return to our story."

The scenic style of narrative described above is not characteristic of all chapters. Gregory uses it more frequently than any other, but some episodes consist of dry summaries of action, with no direct speech and no emphasis on the dramatic moment by the inclusion of gestures, or props, for instance *Hist.* 5.1 and 2, on Brunhild's reaction to the murder of Sigibert, Chilperic's confiscation of her treasure, and Merovech's marriage to Brunhild in Rouen. This is also the style of many shorter chapters on the deaths of holy men or the passing away of bishops and the appointment of their successors. More often than not, Gregory is not satisfied with these terse communications and animates them somewhat with a speech or two, or even with a message delivered in the first-person of the sender, as if he were present and speaking, for example *Hist.* 6.43 on Leovigild's victories in Galicia over the Sueves and his rebellious son Hermenegild, where the king's strategic deliberations are presented as direct speech, or the letters of Leovigild to Fredegund surprised by Guntram, which convey the Spanish king's orders to "Kill our enemies, that is, Childebert and his mother, as quickly as you can." (*Hist.* 8.28), From Book 5 on, this summary style is also used for accounts of the weather, omens, and natural catastrophes including plagues; such chapters often encompass a season's worth of such information (e.g. *Hist.* 5.23 and 33) and appear sporadically in all the remaining books. The *Histories* combine these various types of summaries with the scenic style which Gregory is better known for, and which he uses far more often and at greater length. But that style doesn't absolutely require the presence of direct speech. Gregory's tendency to quote his characters' own words is the feature to which critics have paid most attention, but he was quite able to dramatize a piece of narrative without using dialogue. We need only think of the assassin sent by Fredegund to kill Guntram and who is found loitering suspiciously in church before early communion: illuminated by the candle carried before the king, he lies against the wall pretending to sleep, wearing his sword and with his spear leaning against the wall (*Hist.* 8.44).[28] Equally speechless is the scene where Gregory goes at dawn to pray at the church of Saint Julian in Paris and finds one of the false prophets lying there drunk in his own vomit. "I was quite unable to step into the church for this odor. One of the junior clergy ventured forward holding his nose and tried to rouse the man" (*Hist.* 9.6).[29]

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28   Not an uncommon mise-en-scène; see also *Hist.* 9.3.

29   "Sed nec nos prae hoc fetore in basilicam ingredi potueramus. Accedens vero unus clericorum, clausis naribus, eum excitare nititur" (419). In the same style, see also the killing of Magnovald at King Childebert's command (*Hist.* 8.36): the man is distracted and amused by the spectacle of an animal harried by hounds, and laughs as the axe is about to cleave his skull.

The narrative complexity of the *Histories*, enhanced by this formal variety, is due chiefly to the constant change of subject matter. The alternation of secular and ecclesiastical events is the fundamental turn by which Gregory adapted the Orosian format to his own historical argument, but in fact he was already covering a very complex political history that moved between the three Merovingian kingdoms and then south and eastward, to Spain, Italy, and the empire. The non-secular narrative consisted of church history proper, in many ways not unlike the political chronicle, with its appointments of bishops, contested elections, and clerical rebellions on the one hand, and on the other of the hagiography of the period, with its profiles of individual saints and ascetics and its unchanging episodes of healing, demonic possession, and liberation of prisoners. The panoramic account of the two realms combined into one has space left over for weather and omens as well as episodes that appear to belong to the Merovingian crime pages: a butchery at the tomb of Saint Denis on the occasion of an oath-swearing (*Hist.* 5.32), the lover of a married woman who murders her husband and brother-in-law (*Hist.* 6.36) and is later killed himself (*Hist.* 7.3), the murder of a Jewish moneylender and his entourage (*Hist.* 7.23) and that of a wine-merchant by his Saxon servants (*Hist.* 7.46).[30] The effect is equivalent to that of a split screen in film, juxtaposing details and elements of context to the actions of the larger story. A recent partial translation of the *Histories* that isolates the political action and leaves out as much as possible of the rest, including most church history and hagiography, has demonstrated that, by itself, this central part of the narrative is shapely and logical and not chaotic at all.[31] Gregory today is appreciated as a stylist, for his boldness in leaving behind the literary language of tradition and letting his own age make itself heard in the realism of his narrative and most directly in the words of his characters, whose distinctive voices he was able to capture.[32] But he should

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30   Vinay, *San Gregorio di Tours*, 83 connects these notices of "i volgari fatterelli" with Books 5 to 10 only, and with provincialism: they all concern Tours. Recently Halsall, "The Preface to Book v," 303 note 16, has suggested that Gregory's reference to the feud of Sicharius and Chramnesindus as "bella civilia" at the beginning of *Hist.* 7.47 is ironic at the expense of the wars of kings. This would imply on Gregory's part a sense of the insignificance of such altercations. Can we be sure he thought of them as trivial? The fact that he uses the same phrase again when, in *Hist.* 9.19, the feud is rekindled, makes it sound as if he found it just appropriate.

31   Gregory of Tours, *The Merovingians*, (ed.) and trans. Alexander Callander Murray, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures 10 (Peterborough, Ont., 2006). See xviii–xxi for the rationale of the selections.

32   Cf. Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire a Isidore de Séville*. Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 243 (Rome 1981), 346–347:

also be appreciated for his originality as a narrator, in designing and carrying out a multi-faceted survey of a period of history and doing justice to every aspect of its constantly changing complexity. Other histories may have a simpler structure that makes them easier to follow, but only the *Histories* manages to combine memorably vivid storytelling with a uniquely comprehensive scope.

10.4   Narrative Sources and Models

Originality is an unaccustomed and most often unsought quality in ancient and early medieval historiography. Today, Gregory's *Histories*, which sounds like no work of either period, drives scholars burdened with the task of appraising his literary talent to one of several unsatisfactory compromises. Either he wrote in this strange way because he couldn't do otherwise, a notion that may be excused because it is often inspired by Gregory's own apologies for his unclassical language, though these apologies can also be read as statements of his decision to write in a new way, or else he had an innate aptitude for realism which allowed him to channel the life of 6th-century Gaul unmediated by literary art or any conscious selection and manipulation of narrative forms. This tendency to deny the artful character of the *Histories* and to attribute its unusual form to ignorance, accident, or a passive apprehension of reality as it was manifests itself in the general obliviousness of critics to Gregory's use of literary sources and models. Siegmund Hellmann, who was lucid enough to write that "There is no place here for the 'naivety' or 'objectivity' that are often admired in Gregory," can also state that "In spite of occasional borrowings from Sulpicius Severus or Sidonius Apollinaris, no dependence, even from the writers he admired most, can be found in Gregory."[33] Gustavo Vinay assures us, on the

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"La différence essentielle entre Fortunat et Grégoire ne vient peut-être pas d'une disparité d'ordre culturel, mais tout simplement du talent littéraire dans lequel Grégoire, contrairement a ce que l'on pouvait croire, dépasse infiniment Fortunat. Celui-ci se contente souvent d'adapter au monde qu'il veut decrire des formules poétiques éprouvées. Grégoire, au contraire, est un artiste plus complet dans la mesure ou il applique sur la réalité mérovingienne un langage et un style qui font corps avec elle...De fait, nous regardons aujourdhui les écrits de Grégoire comme la plus pure expression du genie mérovingien."

33   Hellmann, "Studien," 37: "Für die 'Naivetät' und 'Objectivität' die man an Gregor zu bewundern pflegt, ist hier kein Platz." See also Thürlemann, *Der historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours*, 53–58 ["Naivität als Garant der Wirklichkeitstreue?"]; and "Studien," 16: "So ist auch Gregor selbst, trotz gelegentlichen Anleihen bei Sulpicius Severus oder

other hand, that for events after Gregory's own consecration as bishop in 573 we may exclude the use of written sources.[34] While Gregory often uses literary sources without saying so, or identifying their authors, that is not always the case.

10.4.1   *Recycling Prudentius*

Here it is necessary to put the *Histories* aside for a moment and turn to the *Glory of the Martyrs*, in Chapter 40 of which the bishop of Tours not only starts by naming his source ("Prudentius noster in libro contra Iudaeos"), but after telling his own version of the story ends by adding to his account a slightly truncated text of the original, "lest this narrative should seem incredible to anyone."[35] In doing so, he provides a snapshot of himself as a late-antique man of letters, at work adapting a prestigious text to the purposes of his own collection of stories.

In his original, a rare narrative passage in the *Apotheosis*, which is a versified defense of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and the nature(s) of its persons, Prudentius drew on an episode of Lactantius' *De mortibus* to present the pagan persecutor Diocletian, whom he does not name, as an exception to the worldwide triumph of Christianity: the emperor, who worships numerous gods and their images, is shown presiding over a sacrifice to Hecate/Proserpina. There is a careful description of the sacrificial cattle, ritually adorned, waiting to be butchered, and of the pagan priest searching the entrails for a divine message. The priest announces suddenly that the goddess is withdrawing and the elements of worship – fire and incense – are failing and going out, and asks the emperor to see whether perhaps a Christian ("an enemy of our gods") is present among his guards. He collapses, and the emperor, removing his diadem, looks around in search of the Christian intruder. A young soldier of the guard is arrested and throws down his jeweled spear, proclaiming that he bears the sign of Christ. Diocletian runs out of the temple, knocking down another priest in his haste, and the public left behind there converts to Christianity immediately.[36] The episode stands conspicuously isolated in Prudentius' poem: in the middle of an abstract discussion of the scriptural and typological evidence for

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Apollinaris Sidonius, keine Abhängigkeit, auch von den von ihm am meisten verehrten Schriftstellern nachzuweisen." Hellmann must have in mind Gregory's few citations of the letters of Sidonius. See, however, note 42 below.

34   *San Gregorio di Tours*, 83: "…I fatti posteriori al'assunzione di Gregorio all'episcopato (573), per I quali si può escludere l'uso di fonti scritte di qualisiasi natura."

35   "Quae relatio, ne cui fortassis videatur incredula, paucos ex his subiciam versos" (64).

36   *Apotheosis* 2, 449–502, (ed.) M.P. Cunningham, 92–94.

Christian dogma, it reduces religion, both pagan and Christian, to an array of gestures and liturgies. Diocletian worships various gods, each one with specific rites; the priest handles the entrails and collapses; the emperor removes his diadem and leaves the temple, the young Christian guard throws down his spear, the emblem of secular service, and the converted audience looks heavenward and praises the name of Christ. Aside from the fact that it provides the text of its source, which makes it exceptional, Gregory's prose version fits perfectly among the miracles of *Glory of the Martyrs*, where it illustrates the supernatural power of the Christian name, that is to say, of the act of calling oneself a Christian or acknowledging one's Christian faith. In his insightful study of Gregory's historical discourse, Felix Thürlemann brought attention to this episode and made the point that Gregory included Prudentius' version in his own text to prove that he had not deviated from it, which would imply that he thought of the changes he had introduced as not affecting the core of the narrative, its *materia*, but only its *ornatus*, the literary elaboration left to the writer's discretion.[37] Gregory has preserved all the externals of his source: the situation and cast of characters, the basic actions and gestures. But by adding new elements, and particularly by giving speeches to the emperor and the young Christian guard, where in Prudentius only the pagan priest gets to speak, he has changed the meaning of the entire episode. Whereas in the *Apotheosis* the scene represents the defeat of paganism, driven from its own altars by the failure of the sacrifice, Gregory has transformed it into a sort of courtroom scene embodying the triumph of Christianity, with the pagan priest as prosecutor, the emperor as judge, and the guard as the defendant, victorious by the very act of witnessing that will make him a martyr.[38]

A few observations can be added to Thürlemann's reading. Among the externals of the scene, Gregory's chief cuts are made to reduce the rich and erudite antiquarianism of Prudentius' presentation: the names of the various deities disappear, as do the specific devotions with which Diocletian worships them, the offering of wax plates to Diana and bowing to a clay image of Minerva, for example. All that is left is the imagery of sacrifice and the haruspex's gory examination, possibly because for Gregory's audience this would have been the most alien and shocking aspect of pagan worship, while liturgical use of wax and the veneration of images were not absent from their own religious practices. As to the creation of new speeches for the emperor and the guard, we should keep in mind that already in ancient historiography quoted

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37   *Der historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours*, 44–48 and 114–119.

38   The two versions are so triumphalistic that they omit to specify the fate of the young guard, though it alone gives sense to the episode.

speeches were left to the writer's invention.[39] If Prudentius has but a single one, it is because in the episode, as he conceives it, only one of his characters has something important to say. The priest is the skilled interpreter of pagan liturgy; he speaks with authority when he reports that the sacrifice has failed and Hecate is leaving the altar; there must be a Christian present. The other two characters can add nothing to this announcement. Gregory, who had made the Orosian framework his own by adapting it to his central theme of king/bishop relations, projects these roles into a scene of dying paganism: the high priest asks Diocletian to find out whether an unbeliever is present; the emperor requests that any Christian shall identify himself; the guard says "Yes; I am a Christian." The scene is replayed within the model of power and hierarchy known to the bishop of Tours, the only one that gives sense to his *Histories* as a whole.

10.4.2   *Restaging Sidonius*

Gregory felt great sympathy and respect for Sidonius Apollinaris, who had been bishop of Clermont, the city of Gregory's birth, and whose convoluted late-antique eloquence he appears to have admired. The *Histories* is in fact an important source for Sidonius' episcopate.[40] Acknowledging his indebtedness to Sidonius for much information, especially in Book 2, Gregory, who refers to him as "Sollius noster," brings up his letters twice in that book,[41] and later, in Book 4.12, applies to Cautinus, a later bishop of Clermont, words originally used by Sidonius to describe Seronatus, the abusive *vicarius* of the Seven Provinces.[42] Given Gregory's much-debated claim to *rusticitas*, it is perhaps reassuring to find him making such thorough and confident use of an author whose own contemporary, Ruricius of Limoges, confessed he occasionally

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39   See Charles William Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley, 1983), Chapter 4, pp. 142–168.

40   See especially *Hist.* 2. 21–23 (67–69).

41   Ep. 7.12 (to Bishop Patiens of Lyon) and 7.6 (to Bishop Basilius of Aix), cited in *Hist.* 2, 24 and 2.25 respectively (70–71). All citations of Sidonius texts are from the edition and translation by W.B. Anderson, LCL, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass., 1935–1965).

42   Ep. 2.1, vol. 1, 414: "Totum quod concupiscit quasi comparat nec dat pretia contemnens nec accipit instrumenta desperans...." Gregory's account of King Euric's persecution of the Catholic church in southern Gaul, even beyond the borders of his realm (*Hist.* 2.25, 70–71) is derived mainly from Sidonius, Ep. 7.6, (ed.) Anderson, 2: 312–322, addressed to Bishop Basilius of Aix. K.F. Stroheker, *Eurich, König der Westgoten* (Stuttgart, 1937), 40–57 was among the first to argue that Gregory distorted and exaggerated Sidonius' account, driven by anti-Arian animus.

found baffling "because of the obscurity of his locutions."[43] But Gregory did not acknowledge other instances of Sidonius' influence, possibly because in those cases it was not information or an elegant phrase that he was taking over, but a narrative formula.

Among the most interesting pieces of Sidonius' correspondence is letter 1.7, in which the author, who had recently finished a stint as prefect of Rome and had not yet been ordained or elected bishop, explains to an unidentified Vincentius the circumstances of the fall of Arvandus, the praetorian prefect of Gaul, and his own role in that event. In 468, when Arvandus was summoned to Rome to answer charges of extortion, Sidonius was coming to the term of his appointment as prefect. He and Auxanius, a political ally about whom nothing else is known, had done all they could to save Arvandus, their colleague and *amicus*, and their interference had been deeply resented, particularly by the nobility of Roman Gaul, from whom the charges came. The letter is dated by most scholars to 469 and, as part of the first two books of Sidonius' *epistolae*, was made public that same year or the next. The original must have been penned immediately after Arvandus was found guilty, of high treason rather than extortion. Within the established period of thirty days, the initial sentence of death was commuted to one of exile, yet the published letter shows no awareness of this change and refers to Arvandus as to one who will soon be executed. The timing of the letter would seem to indicate a perceived need on the part of Sidonius to account for his intervention and justify himself as far as possible. His strategy can only be called blunt: an appeal to the code of *amicitia* ("amicus homini fui") at the very beginning, followed by a statement that it would have been barbarous not to stand by one's *amicus* in his adversity, and finally by an insistence on the disinterested character of his gesture, which had only been met by the rudeness and ingratitude of the beneficiary.[44]

From a literary point of view, the letter is remarkable. It is among the longer letters in the nine books of Sidonius' correspondence, and one of the very few

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43   Ruricius, Ep. 2.26, (ed.) R. Demeulenaere, 366: "prae obscuritate dictorum." I quote the translation of Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Gaul*, TTH 30 (Liverpool, 1999), 184. On Ruricius, see also Ralph W. Mathisen, "The Letters of Ruricius of Limoges and the Passage from Roman to Frankish Gaul," in Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer eds., *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul: Revisiting the Sources* (Ashgate, 2001), 101–115.

44   The letter appears to have failed to have its intended effect, and that is not surprising. Sidonius' almost immediate ordination and election to the episcopate are likely to have been prompted by his finding all doors to further secular distinction closed to him in his native Gaul. That this was the case is argued convincingly in Jill Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome* (Oxford, 1994), 159–166.

– three or four at most – that consist almost entirely of dramatic narrative. The account itself is full of details: actions, gestures, settings, and props, and, though much richer in these elements than the more schematic writing of the early medieval historians, it has in common with them that these numerous details all serve ideological purposes. None of them are there for the sake of authenticating realism. A second constitutive element of the letter is a character analysis of Arvandus that runs simultaneously with the events of his downfall. Because the analysis too is ideological and portrays all of Arvandus' actions at this point as caused by a tension between his social origin and his high political office, the effect is to present the former praetorian prefect as the architect of his own fall, made inevitable by his uncontrolled arrogance and resentment.

Arvandus, a man of plebeian origin,[45] had been prefect of Gaul for two consecutive periods, the first of which had satisfied all expectations. By the second, however, he had contracted debts and become guilty of extensive financial corruption. It was to face charges on this score that he had been summoned to Rome, where he arrived in bonds (*destinatus*), though once there he was placed in the care of a friend, the Count of the Sacred Largesses and, as Sidonius puts it, on account of "the lingering fragrance of the prefectorial dignity" ("semifumantem praefecturae…dignitatem") was allowed a great deal of liberty before he appeared in court to confront his accusers, who were still on their way to Rome.

As prefect of Rome, Sidonius had been able to find out that the evidence against Arvandus now included a letter he had sent to the Visigothic king Euric advising him to have no dealings with the new emperor Anthemius, to attack the Britons of Gaul, who were imperial allies, and to share whatever lands they might be able to take from them with the Burgundians. Sidonius and his friend Auxanius, who realized that this might be used to support a charge of high treason, revealed to Arvandus that his accusers had got hold of the letter, planned to use it against him, and advised him not to acknowledge it as his work. The breach of loyalty to the government in making this information and advice available to the former prefect was their boldest step on his behalf. As Sidonius points out, he might as well have saved himself the trouble, for their counsel was rejected by Arvandus in the most abusive terms.

Sidonius had no reason to be surprised , as he was already aware of Arvandus' usual treatment of those colleagues in public service tied to him by the same bonds of *amicitia*: "He mocked every one of them when they conversed with him, professed astonishment at their suggestions, and ignored their services; if

45   See *PLRE* 2, 157–158, s.v. Arvandus.

only few sought to accost him he nursed suspicion, if many, contempt."[46] This ultimately fatal rudeness might be traced to pure arrogance if the mention of suspicion did not suggest a different sort of motivation. When Sidonius and Auxanius approach him in Rome with their warnings about the compromising letter, the reaction attributed to him is intended to be more revealing, and Sidonius stages it accordingly: "he started forward and, in a moment, burst into violent taunts: 'Off with you, degenerate cravens,' he said, 'unworthy of your prefect fathers – off with you and with your uncalled-for panic! Let me look after this side of the business, since you have no comprehension of it; for Arvandus, his consciousness of innocence is enough; only with difficulty shall I bring myself to allow advocates to defend me on the charge of extortion."[47] The gratuitous reference to his benefactors as "unworthy of your prefect fathers" is meant to identify the ultimate source of this self-destructive behavior as resentment, in this case resentment by the socially successful plebeian of his aristocratic colleagues in the service of the state. As if to make sure that readers do not miss this point, Sidonius, after Arvandus has been convicted of treason, remarks that he was conveyed to the state prison, or *ergastulum* "as one not degraded but rather restored to a plebeian family."[48] This character-sketch of Arvandus is actually an aspect of Sidonius' self-justification in the letter. Once he has said that Arvandus' first period in power was a success, he has no other positive thing to tell about him. The *amicitia* he invokes to explain why he protected him has a range of application that extends from what we would call friendship today to mere solidarity with one's social equals and colleagues in public office.[49] Sidonius is making it clear that he obeyed the code in this latter sense, from no personal preference, and that he got no thanks for it.

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46 Ep. 1.7, 1:368: "omnium colloquia ridere, consilia mirari, officia contemnere, pati de occurrentum raritate suspicionem, de adsiduitate fastidium…." That Sidonius was not overly sensitive to the abuse aimed at him by temperamental friends is suggested by a comment in his letter mourning the rhetorician Lampridius, who had been murdered by his slaves (Ep. 7.11 [ed. Anderson, 2: 464]): "et tamen nullus sic amicus, qui posset effugere convicium…."

47 Ep. 1.7, 1: 372: "…proripit sese atque in convicia subita prorumpens: 'abite degeneres,' inquit, 'et praefectoriis patribus indigni, cum hac superforanea trepidatione; mihi, quia nihil intelligitis, hanc negotii partem sinite curandam; satis Arvando conscientia sua sufficit; vix illud dignabor admittere, ut advocati mihi in actionibus repetundarum sermocinentur'."

48 Ibid. 376: "…plebeiae familiae non ut additus sed ut redditus."

49 See Ian N. Wood, "Family and Friendship in the West," in Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins, and Michael Whitby eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History* 14: *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors A.D. 425–600*, (Cambridge, 2000), 416–436 and esp. 434 on friendship as "essentially the bond between those of equal status."

The fatal drive to self-assertion triggered by the ex-prefect's resentment is staged elaborately on two occasions of his stay in Rome. Under the mild guardianship of his friend, the Count of the Sacred Largesses, he is allowed to appear in public before his trial and shows up at the Capitoline terrace wearing a festal white tunic to receive all manner of greetings and salutations. While there, he visits the tables where the jewelers display their wares: "again, he pries into silk wares and all the costly cases of the goldsmiths and (as if he meant to make a purchase) scans them closely, snatches them up, disparages them and flings them back."[50] His last appearance, at the Council Chamber, is suicidally reckless. Given the rich dramatic detail of this last scene, it is especially remarkable that Sidonius notes in passing that he was not present, as we would have expected him to be as prefect of the city. Arvandus came elegantly dressed and groomed, while the Gallic envoys, who brought the accusation against him and had just arrived in Rome, appeared unkempt and exhausted by the journey. When asked to sit, Arvandus chose a place "almost in the laps of his judges,"[51] while Tonantius Ferreolus, the chief Gallic deputy, took a modest place further back and his two companions remained standing. Finally, while the incriminating letter was being read aloud, Arvandus, as if to hasten the procedure, called out impatiently more than once that it was his indeed and that he admitted having dictated it. He was immediately convicted of high treason and only at that point did he appear to understand what he had accomplished.

Well over a century later, Gregory of Tours wrote an account of the fall of Leudast, count of Tours, in the sixth book of his *Histories*.[52] Leudast, the son of a slave and born a slave himself, had been one of the bishop's most unrelenting and dangerous enemies, and had put Gregory's position and even his life in jeopardy by attributing to him some slander against Queen Fredegund and Bertram, bishop of Bordeaux, which he himself had put in circulation. Already at the end of Book 5 of the *Histories* Gregory gives a full description of his meeting with King Chilperic and the bishops of the realm at which he was permitted to swear himself innocent, after which Leudast, by taking flight on the spot, acknowledged his guilt.[53] Later the former count, who in the meantime had lived as a fugitive, appeared in Tours once more, bearing a letter from Chilperic and several bishops that authorized him to live in the city and admitted him to communion. Gregory, who knew Fredegund's vengeful temper,

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50   Ep. 1.7, 1: 372: "…modo serica et gemmas et pretiosa quaeque trapezitarum involucra rimari et quasi mercaturus inspicere, prensare, depretiari devolvere."

51   Ibid. 374: "mediis prope iudicum sinibus."

52   *Hist*. 6.32, 302–304. See also *PLRE* 3B, 786–788, s.v. Leudastes.

53   *Hist*. 5.49, 256–263.

wrote to the queen, and she wrote back asking him not to make peace with Leudast or give him communion before he had heard from her again. At this, Gregory sent word to Leudast through his father-in-law, advising him to be on his guard. But he, who remained Gregory's sworn foe, ignored this counsel.[54] Instead, he followed Chilperic and his troops to the region of Melun and there appeared before the king to beg his forgiveness. Chilperic, who appears to have had a soft spot for Leudast, recommended patience, as the queen was still furious and would be hard to appease. But Leudast was incapable of restraint and on the following Sunday threw himself at the feet of the royal couple at church in Paris. In spite of Fredegund's angry and threatening outcry, which boded no good, he then went strolling after the king and queen in the most carefree manner. "He went round the shops, looking at what they had for sale, counting how much money he had in his purse and asking to be shown various pieces of jewelry. 'I will buy this, and that, too,' he said, 'for I have sufficient gold and silver with me'."[55] It was at that moment that Fredegund's men caught up with him and put him to death in the most brutal manner.

There can be little doubt that Gregory is using Sidonius' narrative to represent the undoing of his own worst enemy. But what is the relation between the two texts? It cannot be said that they share a topos, for this sequence of actions does not occur elsewhere, and the striking detail of the visit to the goldsmiths is too specific to constitute any kind of narrative cliché. It is also not the case that Gregory is quoting Sidonius and that his public is intended to recognize the source of this episode, for that would lessen its credibility, which is far from Gregory's aim. I would argue that this story of good advice spurned by a brutal and arrogant man, who then marches to his doom, stopping on the way to visit jewelers' displays, is a narrative borrowing by Gregory, who found it particularly suitable for the story he had to tell. A chief attraction would have been that the rejected advice came from the first-person narrator, allowing him to paint himself into the picture in the same compassionate role that Sidonius had assumed towards Arvandus in the original.

There is a thorough change of style, and in the scene at the jewelers,' for example, Sidonius' "pretiosa trapezitarum involucra" make way for a much plainer "domus negutiantum." The only word in common is the verb "rimari," used to describe the protagonist's scrutiny of the wares. Gregory adds a coment

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54   *Hist.* 6.32, 302: "Sed ille consilium meum, quod pro Dei intuit simpliciter insinuavi, dolose suspiciens, cum adhuc nobis esset inimicus, noluit agere quae mandavi...."

55   Ibid. 303: "domusque negutiantum circumiens, species rimatur, argentum pensat atque diversa ornamenta prospicit, dicens: 'Haec et haec conparabo, quia multum mihi aurum argentumque residit'."

in direct form, presumably aimed by Leudast at the merchants: "I'll buy this one and that one...for I have lots of gold and silver." But the really significant alterations take place in the narrative as a whole. Sidonius had justified his offer of privileged information and advice to Arvandus by invoking the code of *amicitia*. Gregory could do no such thing, as Leudast was known to be his nemesis and far below him in the social hierarchy. Even though his advice had been conveyed by a third party, and summarily rejected, he felt the need to explain his intervention. His position as bishop of Tours and guardian of the tomb of Saint Martin provided him with an excellent rationale for the Christian solicitude with which he counsels his enemies here and elsewhere. The chamberlain Eberulf, accused by Fredegund of the murder of Chilperic, takes refuge at the shrine of Saint Martin, which he pollutes with profane behavior. Gregory, whom he frequently threatens, offers in return his advice and assistance: "he was particularly suspicious of me, although I was running around on his behalf in good faith, and he kept promising that if he ever regained the king's favor he would take vengeance on me for what he had gone through. God, to whom the secrets of the heart are revealed, knows that I helped him honestly as much as I could."[56] Like Leudast, Eberulf distrusts the bishop's friendly overtures from suspicion. In the case of the count, however, Gregory's kindness seems even more implausible, as the slander Leudast had imputed to him had placed the bishop in real danger. This is why he humanizes the pastoral perfection of his attitude by adding that, indeed, he had known beforehand that his advice would not be taken: "And so was fulfilled the proverb that I once heard an old man say: 'Always give good advice to friend and foe alike because the friend will take it and the foe reject it.'"[57]

Even more significant is the disappearance of resentment as the reason the advice is spurned. The social system in which resentment would have made sense no longer existed. Sidonius himself had written its obituary in Gaul in a letter to his friend Johannes, observing that "now that the old degrees of official rank are swept away, those degrees by which the highest in the land used to be distinguished from the lowest, the only token of nobility will henceforth

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56   *Hist.* 7.22, 340–341: "Ex hoc nos maxime suspectus habebat, qui in causis eius fideliter currebamus, promittens plerumque, quod, si umquam ad regis gratiam perveniret, in nobis haec quae perferebat ulcisceretur. Deus enim novit, qui arcana pectoris revelantur, quia *de puro corde* in quantum potuemus, solatium ministravimus."

57   *Hist.* 6.32, 302: "impletumque est autem illum proverbium quod quondam senem narrantem audivi: 'Amico inimicoque bonum simper praebe consilium, quia amicus accepit, inimicus spernit'."

be a knowledge of letters."[58] Gregory was all too aware that he lived in an age in which clever and ambitious slaves such as Andarchius and Leudast needed only a minimum of royal patronage to become dangerous to their social betters.[59] It is from a not unreasonable distrust that Leudast turns down the counsel of the aristocratic bishop he had brought to the brink of disaster.

But the old system and the *cursus honorum* it made possible were not forgotten. It is likely that Gregory recognized in Sidonius' account a profile of subversive lower-class ambition, and this was what made him find the narrative model of Arvandus' downfall appropriate for the fall of Leudast. The bishop of Tours was certainly class-conscious, and Sidonius' sarcastic remark that arrogant Arvandus, in falling from the height of the prefecture of Gaul, had been restored to his plebeian origins, must have seemed pleasing and just to him. Such reversals of fortune could proceed from a weakness of character, and just as Arvandus, according to Sidonius, "never had in his disposition any firmness of principle," Leudast, once the falsity of his charges against Gregory was revealed, "fled, because he was a man infirm of purpose and vacillating in judgment."[60] Earlier, while tracing the initial stages of his enemy's rise from slavery to the position of count, and specifically his being moved from his master's kitchen to the bakery, Gregory pointedly parodies the *cursus honorum* by writing that "he was removed from the pestle and promoted to the baker's basket."[61]

10.4.3   *The Pathos of Pretenders*

Gregory followed carefully the lives of public figures, even the ones in supporting roles, considering them primarily from the point of view of career and advancement. He was attentive to unlikely or unpromising beginnings: the priest "picked out from among the poor and appointed archdeacon," the slave

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58   Ep. 8.2, 2: 403–404: "nam iam remotis gradibus dignitatum, per quas solebat ultimo a quoque summus quisque discerni, solum erit posthac nobilitatis indicium litteras nosse."

59   On Andarchius see *Hist* 4.48 (180–183) and Wood, "Family and Frienship," 418. But times had changed: compare the grimness of Gregory's versions of Merovingian picaresque with Sidonius' humorous and circumstantial account of the swindler Amantius to his correspondent Bishop Graecus of Marseilles, Ep. 7.2, ed Anderson, 2: 292–302. On guile and treachery in the Merovingian world, see the stimulating observations in Peter Brown, "Gregory of Tours: Introduction," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Mitchell/Wood, 1–28, esp. 19–24.

60   Ep. 1.7, 1: 366: "porro autem in natura ille non habuit diligentiam perseverandi;" *Hist.* 5.49, 261: "Ille autem secundum infirmitatem vel consilii vel propositionis suae iam fugam inierat."

61   *Hist* 5.48, 257: "amotus a pistillo, promovitur ad cophinum."

who becomes versed in literature, the son of a slave in the mills of the church who makes it to royal physician,[62] to fortunes accumulated by treachery and crime (Guntram Boso and Mummolus among the most notable), and to spectacularly harsh or catastrophic endings. Of careers that end badly, those of pretenders and usurpers are particularly conspicuous, often matching the severity of the end to the character's ambition. The *Histories* dedicates some of its best-known pages to such figures, whom it presents as uniformly fated to betrayal, humiliation, and a violent death.[63] My argument here will be that Gregory, in his portrayal of pretenders, is drawing on a late antique literary theme of the doom of usurpers. It is not possible to point to a specific source, but only to Gregory's acquaintance with the tradition and to its various manifestations in the *Histories*.

Before looking at the texts, we should consider a lexical point. The common Latin term for pretenders and usurpers in late antiquity and the early middle ages is *tyrannus*, and for their government the abstract, originally Greek, noun *tyrannis* (gen. *tyrannidis*). An older meaning of the term, moral and pejorative, makes the *tyrannus* an abusive ruler, one who oppresses and exploits his subjects. Without ever wholly disappearing, this older meaning yielded in late antiquity to a more technical sense, and *tyrannus* came to refer to those who seized power or attempted to do so in an illegitimate manner or without a legitimate claim.[64] What is noteworthy about Gregory's usage in the *Histories*

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62   These are, respectively, Riculf the priest (*Hist* 5.49, 262: "de pauperibus provocatus, archidiaconus ordinatus est"), Andarchius (see above note 59), and Marileif (*Hist*. 7.25). Note that King Guntram ascribes similar origins to Gundovald in *Hist*. 7.14, 336: "cuius pater molinas gobernavit."

63   On this subject, see most recently Ian N. Wood, "Usurpers and Merovingian Kingship," in Matthias Becker and Jörg Jarnut (eds.), *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung* (Münster 2004), 15–31, and Julia Hofmann, "The Men Who Would Be Kings: Challenges to Royal Authority in the Frankish Regna, c. 500–700" (doctoral dissertation, Oxford, 2008). I must thank Dr. Hofmann for making her dissertation available to me.

64   See Valerio Neri, "L'usurpatore come tiranno nel lessico politico della tarda antichità," in François Paschoud and Joachim Szidat (eds.), *Usurpationen in der Spätantike. Akten des Colloquiums "Staatsstreich und Staatlichkeit," Historia* Einzelschriften 111 (Stuttgart, 1997), 71–86, and Mark Humphries, "From Usurper to Emperor: The Politics of Legitimation in the Age of Constantine," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.1 (2008), 82–100. Joachim Szidat's recent monograph, *Usurpator tanti nominis. Kaiser und Usurpator in der Spätantike (337–476 n. Chr.)* Historia Einzelschriften 210 (Stuttgart, 2010) discusses the use of *tyrannus* and the later *usurpator* on 27–30 ('Begrifflichkeit'). Since the book does not cover the sixth century, Gregory comes up only in passing, and chiefly when he borrows from earlier texts; cf. 454 in the index for Latin texts.

is that he employs *tyrannus* and *tyrannis* in this 'technical' sense, but only early in the book, for such late-antique usurpers as Magnus Maximus and Constantine, and chiefly in quotations from Renatus Frigeridus and Sulpicius Alexander.[65] Later in the work, reproducing in full Radegund's letter of foundation for the monastery of the Holy Cross in Poitiers, he must cite her use of *tyrannus* for the devil: "may no usurper stand in your way, but a rightful king crown your wishes," a Christian variant on the 'technical' use of the word, as it points to the devil's invalid claim on souls that belong to God.[66] What is remarkable is that Gregory never uses *tyrannus* or any other generic term for his Merovingian pretenders. The closest he comes to a characterization of their intent is when he describes Sigulf as one "who had tried to raise himself to the kingship."[67] He clearly avoids grouping the Franks with the Gallic usurpers of the previous century. Two possible reasons appear likely, and are not mutually exclusive: Gregory, on the basis of his sources for the terms, could be associating *tyrannus* and *tyrannis* exclusively with imperial power.[68] It is also possible that because Gundovald and Munderic had claims to Merovingian blood, Gregory avoided words that took illegitimacy for granted. He may also be drawing, or at least implying, a distinction between those who ruled illegitimately and those who only raised claims.

The rebellions of princes against their reigning fathers (Chramn against Chlothar I; Merovech and Clovis against Chilperic) receive a characteristic treatment stressing filial impiety and Gregory's explicit disapproval on this account.[69] What is left for our inspection are the attempts of Munderic and Gundovald and that of a certain Sigulf, who is only mentioned in passing and about whom nothing is known. Still, for all its brevity, the reference preserves significant features.[70] Late in his second attempt to seize royal power, Gundovald and his army come to Toulouse, where Bishop Magnulf refuses to

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65   *Hist.* 1.43, heading, 3: "De interitum Maximi tiranni;" *Hist.* 2.8 and 2.9 (quoting Renatus Frigeridus), and *Hist.* 2.9 (quoting Sulpicius Alexander).

66   *Hist.* 9.42, 471: "vos non tyrannus obpugnet, sed legitimus rex coronet." On this phrase, see Neri, "L'usurpatore come tiranno," 78. The translation here is my own, and very different from that of Lewis Thorpe, 536.

67   *Hist.* 7.27, 343: "qui se in regno elevare voluit."

68   His contemporaries in Visigothic Spain, however, applied these terms to their own pretenders and usurpers: see *The Story of Wamba: Julian of Toledo's Historia Wambae regis*, trans. Joaquín Martínez Pizarro (Washington D.C., 2005), 102 note 59.

69   His disapproval was so strong that it even turned him against the Visigothic prince Hermenegild, a convert to Catholicism, who had rebelled against his Arian father Leovigild; see *Hist.* 6.43.

70   *Hist.* 7.27, 345.

grant them an *adventus* or public reception because he is "not forgetful" of the harm he had suffered from a certain Sigulf, who had also aspired to the throne. Magnulf tells the citizens of Toulouse that the ancestors of King Guntram and his nephew Childebert II are known to them, but not those of the newcomer, and that since Duke Desiderius, the commander of Gundovald's troops, wishes to inflict this calamity on their city, "let him be destroyed in the same way as Sigulf."[71] Three points are worthy of notice. First, that one pretender reminds Magnulf of another; they resemble each other in their behavior and claims, and may be seen as performing the same role. Second, lineage is brought up as the chief objection to their designs.[72] Third, the circumstances of Sigulf's death are apparently well-known, memorable in fact, and involve a harshness that is considered justified for comparable upstarts.

The much richer and more striking story of Munderic is especially interesting because it occurs quite early in the *Histories*.[73] The rebellion and downfall of its protagonist took place before Gregory's birth, for Munderic rose against Theuderic I, the eldest son of Clovis. The events, which for Gregory were somewhat remote, happened in the eastern kingdom of Rheims, and the siege that led to the betrayal and last stand of Munderic has as its stage the fortress of Vitry, in what is today the Marne. We may wonder how substantial a tradition lies behind Gregory's dramatic text. Theuderic, once he realizes that his armies are getting nowhere with the siege, sends Aregisil into the fortress to talk Munderic into giving himself up and then to have him killed as he leaves Vitry. Aregisil agrees with the soldiers outside the fortress on a sign he will use when he comes out with the pretender to indicate that they may safely slay him. Making his way into the fortress, he manages to persuade Munderic – who appears unaware that so far he is winning, or at least safe – to entrust his life to him and seek Theuderic's forgiveness. To convince him, he swears oaths of loyalty, placing his hands on an altar. As Munderic walks out, he is holding

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71   Ibid.: "simili ut Sigulfus sorte depereat."

72   See Ian N. Wood, "Deconstructing the Merovingian Family," in *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts*, ed Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger, and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden, 2003), 149–171. The author observes on p. 152 that "denial of Merovingian paternity was an aspect of 6th- and 7th-century political rhetoric." On Sigulf's possible claims, see Reinhard Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung im Frühmittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1972), 88, who reads here an implication that Sigulf had not claimed royal ancestry. See also, however, Bernard Bachrach, *The Anatomy of a Little War: A Diplomatic and Military History of the Gundovald Affair* (Boulder, 1994), 9, and the critical summary in Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine*, 393 n. 166.

73   *Hist.* 3.14, 110–112.

Aregisil's hand ("tenens manum Aregisili"). This gestural staging of betrayal, which combines ritual expression (i.e. the false oaths) with the attitude of intimacy and trust, both performed by the perjurer's hand, is a fine instance of Gregory's narrative art. At this point, however, Aregisil addresses the agreed-upon words to the staring soldiers and Munderic grasps that he has been betrayed.[74] He is carrying a spear, with which he transfixes Aregisil and then kills as many of the enemy soldiers as he can before falling himself. In doing so, and with what appears to be the approval of the narrator, he provides a possible exception to Walter Goffart's argument that martial heroism is "conspicuously absent" from the *Histories*.[75] The chief textual elements behind the pathos of this episode are therefore the manual gestures of loyalty and trust and then the last-minute awareness of the pretender that his apparent friend is in fact there to destroy him.

Gundovald, the protagonist of Gregory's fullest case-history,[76] gets an unusually detailed introduction which describes his early years among members of the Merovingian family, two of whom treat him as a relative and have him educated for a high station in life, while his alleged father and his uncle Sigibert have him summoned, shorn, and dismissed, or, in the case of Sigibert, exiled to distant Cologne.[77] This first chapter of his story has persuaded many scholars that Gundovald's claims were true and that Gregory believed them, though he gives his account an appearance of impartiality.[78] Lured from

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74 This characteristic gesture of betrayal also occurs elsewhere in the *Histories*. In *Hist.* 5.38, 245, for example, Leovigild, having promised immunity to his rebellious son Hermenegild, has him arrested: "oblitusque sacramenti, innuit suis et adpraehensum spoliavit eum ab indumentis suis induitque ille veste vile."

75 "Conspicuously Absent: Martial Heroism in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours and its Likes," in *The World of Gregory of Tours,* (eds.) Mitchell/Wood (Leiden, 365–393; on Munderic see 371: "However brave these men were, they were merely human in their fighting and bound to succumb when their strength gave out." One could say as much about Beowulf and Roland. For once, I agree with Vinay, *San Gregorio di Tours*, 95, for whom Munderic "sa morire da eroe."

76 Murray, "Chronology and Composition," 158: "Book VII dealing chiefly with the revolt of the pretender Gundovald constitutes, as far as density is concerned, the epicenter of the narrative."

77 *Hist.* 6.24, 291.

78 See Bachrach, *The Anatomy of a Little War*, 251 note 107; Ian N. Wood, "The Secret Histories of Gregory of Tours," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 71 (1993), 253–270, 264; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 56 and 58; Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, 177, on Munderic but also Gundovald. Most recently, Walter Goffart, "The Frankish Pretender Gundovald, 582–585: A Crisis of Merovingian Blood," *Francia* 39 (2012), 1–27 makes a particularly convincing case for Gundovald's Merovingian legitimacy and for Gregory's

Constantinople, where he had settled, by the conspiring nobility of Austrasia, he made his way to Gaul, where, most likely with the promise of Byzantine and Visigothic support, he became involved in two attempts to capture royal power. It is toward the end of the second of these that the elements of pathos multiply to mark his impending doom.

Besieged by Guntram's troops at the fortress of Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (Convenae) at the feet of the Pyrenees, he can hear the taunts of the enemy forces who come up to the walls of Saint Bertrand and call out various scurrilous stories about his origins and upbringing.[79] Gundovald replies standing on the wall over the main gate, tells them the story of his life more or less as Gregory has already told it, and even offers to return to Constantinople if his safety is guaranteed. This may seem a disproportionate gesture when the siege is only beginning and the besiegers have achieved nothing, but from Gregory's choice of verbal tenses it is possible to argue that Gundovald's speech represents a habitual performance and may therefore telescope his changing states of mind in the course of the siege.[80] Despite the great number of besieging troops and the construction and use of impressive siege weaponry, there are no results for the next fifteen days, and the position of Comminges, as Gregory had put it earlier, is so safe that Gundovald's men could have held it for another year "if they had only fought like men."[81]

Leudegisel, head of Guntram's army, chooses to fall back on betrayal and sends a secret messenger to Gundovald's supporters in the fortress, and chiefly to Mummolus the count of Auxerre, promising that their lives shall be spared if they hand over their leader; solemn oaths are sworn to this effect. Mummolus and his associates then approach Gundovald and begin by reminding him that they have sworn him oaths,[82] only to add that the sole option left to them now is to seek reconciliation with Guntram, for which purpose the pretender must leave Saint Bertrand. Gundovald realizes immediately that they intend to betray him and addresses them in tears, recalling for them that he had come to Gaul at their invitation. The perjurers insist on their loyal intentions, but Mummolus even now asks Gundovald to give back to him his golden baldric

account of the pretender as arguing powerfully (though as tactfully as possible) to that effect (see especially 4–7).

79   *Hist.* 7.36, 357. See also note 63 above.

80   Ibid.: "multi…cum Gundovaldo saepius loquebantur, inferentes ei convitia ac dicentes…" and "ille, cum haec audiret…dicebat…" See also Bachrach, *The Anatomy of a Little War*, 247 n. 54.

81   *Hist.* 7.34, 355: "si viriliter stetissent."

82   *Hist.* 7.37, 360]: "ad Gundovaldum pergentes, dixerunt: 'Sacramenta fidelitatis, qualia tibi dedimus, ipse qui praesens es nusti'."

and sword, which the pretender had worn as a token of friendship, and to take back his own blade. Here again Gundovald recognizes an attempt to wipe out all traces of their alliance: "Not as a fool," he says, "do I hear these words, according to which these weapons of yours which until now I have used in sign of friendship should now be taken from me."[83] Though every statement of the betrayers is reinforced by oaths, the pretender walks to the city gate knowing without a doubt that he is being handed over to be killed and, hearing the gate close behind him, "knowing himself to have been betrayed into the power of his enemies,"[84] calls aloud on God to judge and punish his former allies. A spear flung at him fails to kill him, so he is finished off with a stone, after which the troops defile his dead body. Among the salient elements of pathos in Gundovald's story we must list the fear and insecurity obvious in his speech to the besiegers, in which he appears to be giving up before his enemies have made any progress and while his supporters are still loyal to him. Important too is his expressed disbelief in the oaths of Mummolus, for which he is given even stronger grounds by the request that he return his ally's weapons before leaving. On his way to the gates of Saint Bertrand, he is fully conscious of what awaits him and gives voice to his sense of betrayal when he invokes divine justice. The pretender's sense of doom and awareness of treason are the same as for Munderic, though more richly developed.

In projecting these emotions on Munderic, Gundovald, and even the briefly mentioned Sigulf, Gregory makes use of a late antique tradition of representing usurpers and pretenders as doomed, manipulated, and betrayed. I have gathered texts elsewhere to document this kind of portrayal of the usurper *in extremis*.[85] Here I will only discuss two representative instances, one taken from Ammianus and another from Pacatus' panegyric of Theodosius. They show this convention at work in third- and first-person narratives respectively.

Ammianus covers the rebellion of Procopius against Valens at considerable length in Book 26 of his *History*.[86] Though he keeps an ironic distance from the usurper and avoids taking sides in any way, he focuses throughout on Procopius'

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83   Ibid., 361: "Et ille: 'Non simpliciter,' inquid, 'haec verba suscipio, ut ea quae de tuis usque nun in caritate usus sum a me auferantur.'"

84   Ibid. 361: "…cum se in manibus inimicorum cerneret traditum."

85   See *The Story of Wamba*, 134–145.

86   Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 26, 6–9, (ed.) J.C. Rolfe, 2: 596–639. See the excellent discussion of Ammianus' account in J. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (Baltimore, 1989), 191–203, which emphasizes the ambiguities of the historian's point of view and his unconcealed sympathy for the usurper as an individual.

state of mind. Related to the emperor Julian and said to have been in line to succeed him, Procopius was in danger of his life – or thought he was – already under Jovian, during whose reign he fled to remote and secret places where he lived the life of a hunted animal ("cumque ferinae vitae iam fuisset pertaesum"). He returned to the vicinity of Chalcedon only when compelled by extreme need ("postremae necessitatis impulso"). When Valens left Constantinople to prevent a Gothic invasion of Thrace in 356, Procopius managed to bribe a number of conspiring officers to support his claim. Precisely here, at the start of the usurper's brief moment of success, Ammianus notes that, surrounded by his followers, he nevertheless looked like a prisoner ("sed in modo tenebatur obsessi"), reminding the reader that a usurper is in fact most often the captive of his backers, who reserve the right to hand him over to the rightful ruler as a peace offering should their rebellion fail. In his public appearances Procopius proves to be paralyzed by terror and is unable to speak ("per artus tremore diffuso, implicatior ad loquendum, diu tacitus stetit"). His final moments, after being defeated by the forces of Valens in Phrygia, are told with Ammianus' usual remoteness, but also with an exclusive emphasis on the fleeing usurper's frame of mind.

> The greater part of the night had passed. The moon, brightly shining from its evening rise until dawn, increased the fears of Procopius, and since on all sides the opportunity for escape was cut off and he was completely at a loss, he began, as is usual in extreme necessity, to rail at Fortune as cruel and oppressive; and so, overwhelmed as he was by many anxieties, he was suddenly tightly bound by his companions and at daybreak was taken to the camp and handed over to the emperor, silent and terror-stricken. He was at once beheaded, and so put an end to the rising storm of civil strife and war.[87]

In his panegyric of Theodosius, delivered in Rome before the emperor in 389, Pacatus imagines the thoughts of Magnus Maximus as he flees to his final

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[87]   Ibid., 2: 637–639: "Maiore itaque noctis parte consumpta, cum a vespertino ortu luna praelucens in diem metum augeret, undique facultate evadendi exempta, consiliorum inops Procopius, ut in arduis necessitatibus solet, cum Fortuna expostulabat luctuosa et gravi, mersusque multiformibus curis, subito a comitibus suis artius vinctus, relato iam die, ductus ad castra, imperatori offertur, reticens atque defixus, statimque abscisa cervice, discordiarum civilium gliscentes turbines sepelivit et bella…" The translation quoted above is that of J.C. Rolfe.

refuge in Aquileia after the defeat of his troops in the Julian Alps by Theodosius' army:

> Where shall I flee? Shall I try war again? A man whom I could not resist with all my forces intact shall I withstand with only a part? Shall I bar off the Cottian Alps because the Julian Alps were such a help to me? Shall I make for Africa, which I have drained? Shall I seek Britain again, which I abandoned? Shall I entrust myself to Gaul? But I am hated there. Shall I venture to Spain? But I am well known there. What then am I to do, caught between weapons and hatred? In the rear I am harried by my enemies, from the front by my crimes. If I were to die, I had escaped them. But, look, neither my hand obeys my brain, nor the sword my hand. The weapon wavers, my right hand trembles, my resolution falters. Oh, how difficult it is for the wretched even to die.

And Pacatus adds that the tyrant, "caught fast in that terror that was tormenting him, bolted into the town of Aquileia, not that he might defend his life by resisting, but that he might not put off his punishment by procrastination."[88]

Episodes such as these leave a window of rhetorical opportunity for the author, required here to reconstruct moments which by their nature are extremely private, consisting as they do of emotions and personal impressions. The ideological agenda, however, is clearly the same and involves a strong focus on guilt and despair, whether asserted by the narrator or voiced by the character himself. The absence of betrayal, an important component of the picture, from Pacatus' account may be explained by the constraints of panegyric,

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[88] *Panegyricus Latini Pacati Drepani dictvs Theodosio* 38, 2–4, (ed.) R.A.B. Mynors in C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*, 668–669: " 'Quo fugio? Bellumne temptabo? – ut quem viribus totis ferre non potui, parte sustineam? Alpes Cottias obserabo, quia Iuliae profuerunt? Peto Africam, quam exhausi? Repeto Britanniam, quam reliqui? Credo me Galliae? – sed invisus sum. Hispaniae committo? – sed notus sum. Quid ergo faciam inter arma et odia medius? A tergo premor hostibus, a fronte criminibus. Si morerer, evaseram. Sed ecce nec animum sequitur manus nec manum gladius; labitur ferrum, tremit dextera, mens fatiscit. O quam difficile est miseris etiam perire!' " He adds: "…ita ille ipso quo agitabatur metu adligatus in oppidum semet Aquileiensi praecipitat, non ut uitam resistendo defenderet, sed ne poenam frustrando differret." The translation given above is that of Nixon and Rodgers, 505–506. On this panegyric see Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe, "Commemorating the Usurper Magnus Maximus: Ekphrasis, Poetry, and History in Pacatus' Panegyric of Theodosius," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 3/2 (2010), 316–336, which addresses Pacatus' decision to portray the emperor's antagonist, unaccustomed in this genre.

as any assistance from among the usurper's supporters might have made the triumph of Theodosius seem less unqualified. The ecclesiastical histories of Socrates and Sozomen, however unreliable on this point, do assert that in Aquileia Maximus was betrayed by his own men.[89]

Here it might be objected that Ammianus and Pacatus were, as far as we know, unknown to Gregory and would appear too late-antique and imperial to be among his likely sources. But Pacatus and the *Panegyrici latini* cannot have failed to leave behind some echo in their native Gaul, and the writer who could use Sidonius as a model was up to some quite mannered late-antique inspiration. Still, at least one outstanding expression of the tradition of the doom of usurpers was very much within his reach: in the seventh book of his *History Against the Pagans*, Orosius undertakes a *catalogus tyrannorum* with short, trenchant portraits of the various usurpers of his time:

> From this point on, I will go over the catalogue of usurpers as succinctly as possible: Gerontius, a worthless rather than evil man, murdered Constans, the son of Constantine, whose attendant he was, at Vienne, and set in his place a certain Maximus. As for Gerontius himself, he was killed by his soldiers. Maximus, stripped of the purple and abandoned by the soldiers from Gaul who were transferred to Africa and then recalled to Italy, lives now in exile and poverty in Spain, among barbarians. Next Jovinus, the man of highest nobility in Gaul, fell as soon as he elevated himself by usurpation. His brother Sebastian made a single choice: to die as a usurper, and indeed, he was put down as soon as he became one.[90]

These remarks, as well as Orosius' ensuing comments on the usurper Attalus (406–416) "made, unmade, remade, and deposed" by Alaric, who "laughed at the mime and watched the comedy of imperial power,"[91] are difficult to

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89   See Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*, 510 n. 147.

90   Orose, *Histoires* (*Contre les Païens*) 7, 4–6, (ed.) Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, 3: 124: "Iam hinc, ut de catalogo tyrannorum quam breuissime loquar, Constantem Constatini filium Gerontius comes suus, uir nequam magis quam inprobus, apud Viennam interfecit atque in eius locum Maximum quendam substituit; ipse uero Gerontius a suis militibus occisus est. 5 Maximus exutus purpura destitutusque a militibus Gallicanis qui in Africam traiecti, deinde in Italiam reuocati sunt, nunc inter barbaros in Hispania egens exulat. 6 Iouinus postea, uir Galliarum nobilissimus, in tyrannidem mox ut adsurrexit et cecidit. Sebastianus frater eiusdem hoc solum ut tyrannus moreretur elegit: nam continuo ut creatus occisus est." Translations of Orosius are my own.

91   Ibidem 7.7, 3: 124–125: "imperatore facto, infecto, refecto ac defecto...mimum risit et ludum spectavit imperii."

compare with Gregory's work because they lack almost every element of dramatic narrative, as does the entire *History* of Orosius. But there are three striking points in common: the presentation of the usurper's fall as a chapter of a personal destiny rather than a political event, the ubiquity of humiliation, and the presence of betrayal throughout.

These examples share a paradoxical feature with most other instances of the same tradition. We would expect narratives that had adopted the point of view of such characters also to convey a sense of sympathy and compassion, however limited. But that is never the case: their tone is consistently cautionary and punitive, and the sufferings of the defeated *tyranni* are brought forth to illustrate the uncontrolled ambition and arrogance that made them, in the words of Pacatus, "parricides of their own country."[92]

Gregory of Tours drew comprehensively from this tradition for his accounts of Gundovald, Munderic, and Sigulf, which makes it likely that he would have been aware of that aspect of it. In fact, there is a moment in the story of Gundovald where he seems to be referring to it directly. Among the insults addressed to the pretender by the besieging forces, Gregory includes the following taunt: "Death is staring you in the face – that pit of destruction which you have long been seeking and into which you will be hurled headlong."[93] What is remarkable here is that these words, presented together with much other invective as the outpouring of a bloodthirsty and abusive crowd, actually take into account the despair and isolation of the man they aim to degrade, and are no less hostile for that. The pathos of pretenders is being used against them, as a further token of their unworthiness.

Scholars who have written on these episodes recently tend to be of the opinion that Gregory shows a degree of sympathy for the pretenders, if not for their causes or their sponsors.[94] To disagree with them one would have to overlook Gregory's emphasis on the betrayals and perjuries used to bring about their downfall, Gundovald's calling God to witness and Munderic's exceptional last stand, the slaughter of the priests and the common people of Saint Bertrand de Comminges by the victorious party, and the grim catalogue of spectacular and well-deserved deaths of Gundovald's perfidious associates, listed by the bishop

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92 *Panegyricus Latini Pacati Drepani* 12.2, (eds.) Mynors in Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* 653: "publici parricidae;" (translation, ibid., 463).

93 *Hist.* 7.36, 357: "En tibi ante oculus mortem expositam, en ipsam, quam diu quaesisti, exitii foveam, in quae praeceps deiciaris."

94 See above note 78.

of Tours as a sort of *De mortibus traditorum*.[95] If we take these elements in consideration, it is difficult not to conclude that Gregory was subverting the convention of the pretender's desperate last moments and that, for once, it was being used on the pretenders' behalf. On the other hand, to restore the humanity of these pitiful figures can hardly have been the chief purpose of these chapters, even if it generates some memorable instances of dramatic narrative. A more comprehensive aim is likely, possibly to undermine the claims of the victorious side by suggesting that military success does not confer moral legitimacy.

A curious narrative scheme is common to the stories of Munderic and Gundovald: in both the pretenders' enemies besiege them to no effect and then shift their plans explicitly to betrayal and perjury. What is harder to explain is that in both episodes the protagonists yield or are fooled by their opponents before they have suffered any losses. Such behavior might be intended to suggest a failure of nerve, or possibly a natural reaction to the experience of a siege. But it is noteworthy that the scheme is used twice in combination with the theme of the doomed pretender and the disloyalty of his enemies and backers, especially if we keep in mind that one episode had been experienced by Gregory as he was beginning to write the *Histories*, whereas the others had taken place before his birth, and was only known to him from what appears to have been a spare tradition.[96]

Gregory's pretenders remain destined to failure and betrayal, which is a judgment on their own ambition and that of their associates. The sympathy he brings to the representation of their final hours restores a measure of dignity to these pitiful figures, but none to their claims, or to their sponsors, so quick to break their oaths when luck goes against them. A more significant though less conspicuous part of the picture is Gregory's systematic undercutting of the victorious party in its triumph over usurpation, which he attributes to treason and perjury rather than to courage or military skill. There is no glory to be had in secular struggles, as little for legitimate princes as for the pathetic pretenders they manage to suppress. This remained as true in Gregory's own day as it had been in that of Clovis and his sons. Alexander Murray's argument that Gregory

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95   *Hist.* 7.38, 39, 359–363. Goffart, "The Frankish Pretender Gundovald," 11 n. 37 comments that "Gregory's Gundovald was an innocent, more sinned against than sinning; his death scene is very reverent (7.38)."

96   Julia Hofmann, "The men who would be kings," attributes such resemblances to Gregory's uniformly moral viewpoint: "Gregory's (sub)conscious presentation of the affairs as primarily moral conflicts blurs the idiosyncrasies of the stories even as it adds to the similarity of the plots."

worked on the *Histories* from 585 to 594, i.e. that he wrote about events that lay already in the past, and did so from a considered and carefully worked out point of view, allows us to speculate further about the process of composition.[97] If the bishop of Tours started to work on his history in the very year of Gundovald's downfall, it is likely that his experience of the pretender's fate would have prompted him to reflect, pessimistically, on the course of such careers and on the value of the triumphs and defeats to which they led. In that case, it would not be surprising if such thoughts had lent a retrospective color to the representation of earlier pretenders, and particularly to that of Munderic.

10.5   Conclusion

Many pages of the history of Gaul and Western Europe in the 6th century would have to be left blank if we did not have the *Histories*. This is why scholars, well aware that Gregory wrote with a considerable political and ideological agenda, would be glad not to have to deal with a literary design as well.[98] This seems the more desirable since academic history severed its connection to *belles-lettres*, turning any alleged literary dimension of the *Histories* into something of an uncharted territory for its practitioners. The solution has been to define Gregory's narrative art as either an absence, a fortunate escape from the rhetorical constraint of ancient historiography, which then led the bishop of Tours to produce a sort of literary 'arte povera,' or else an extraordinary capacity for realism that turned his work into a clear pane of glass on 6th-century Gaul, possibly because of a unique temperamental affinity between the writer and his own time.[99]

But Gregory was literary, like the other writers of his age, which is not to say that he was not original. Setting out to write the *Histories*, he undertook to repair an omission in the *studium litterarum* of his society.[100] When Orosius

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97   See Murray, "Chronology and Composition," especially 194–196; and cf. ch. 3, above.

98   On Gregory's political agenda, see for example John Moorehead, "Gregory of Tours on the Arian Kingdoms," *Studi Medievali* 36 (1995), 903–915. On the more important social and ideological message, Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 172–191 is essential.

99   Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, 115, puts this very well: "Ampère's premise of naiveté effaces the historian's mediatory presence. To open Gregory's pages is, so it appears, to plunge immediately among the bloody Merovingians. No meddlesome interpreter distracts us from grasping the raw events by intruding his editorial and artistic intelligence."

100   *Hist.* praef., 1: "ingemescebant saepius plerique, dicentes: 'Vae diebus nostris, quia periit studium litterarum a nobis, nec reperitur rhetor in populis, qui gesta praesentia promulgare possit in paginis.'"

mentions the "alternation of good and bad things,"[101] he is referring to a law of the universe which he does not intend to represent in his own work. Gregory, when he announces the confusion of miracles and massacres that will make up his book, is telling us about a form of representation he has chosen.[102]

The art of the *Histories* can be startling in its avoidance of rhetorical eloquence, but it is also unobtrusive, and therefore easy to dismiss as a mere openness to reality, a genius for finding or inventing the trivial and telling detail. There is no better example of this ability than the death of Leudast, preceded by his incongruous and pathetic visit to the jewelers' display, which confirms the "lack of a firm purpose" Gregory attributes to his character.[103] The incident summarizes in itself all possible comments on the *vanitas* of worldly careers and quickly-made fortunes in the Merovingian age. And yet Gregory is borrowing from Sidonius, whom he probably regarded as a predecessor in culturally more fortunate times, and who, himself, was illustrating a very different, imperial, reality.

There is some loss of historical reality in such realizations, but they lead to a more accurate perception of Gregory of Tours.

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101   *Histoires* (*Contre les Païens*) 1: 11, (ed.) Arnaud-Lindet: "iure ab initio hominis per bona malaque alternantia exerceri hunc mundum sentit quisquis per se atque in se humanum genus videt…"

102   *Hist.* 2, prol., 76: "Prosequentes ordinem temporum, mixte confusequae tam virtutes sanctorum quam strages gentium memoramus."

103   *Hist.* 5.49, 261. For the Latin, see note 60 above.

Gregory of Tours, Hagiography, and the Cult of the Saints in the Sixth Century

J.K. Kitchen

11.1   Introduction

Just before he had assumed his post as bishop of Tours in 573, Gregory came down with dysentery. He wrote of the ordeal at the beginning of his second book on Martin's miracles.[1] The account points to the interplay of illness and change. His leaving the Auvergne, his new ecclesiastical status, the sudden proximity of death, and an enlivened sense of moral inadequacy meet in sickness. As one commentator has noted, infirmity tended to strike this cleric during times of transition.[2] Despite his distinguished ancestry, vulnerability rather than privilege is conveyed in the description of the person who was about to assume one of Gaul's prized metropolitan sees. Indeed, the autobiographical

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1   On the date of the ordination, shortly before the end of August, see Krusch, MGH SRM 1.1, 2nd ed., xi, and Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993), 228 n. 49. As for the compositional dates of the VM's four books, see the conflicting positions cited by Van Dam, ibid., 199 n. 2; more recently, and with attention to the problems in modern scholarship regarding the dating of Gregory's works: Alexander Callander Murray, "Chronology and the Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1/1 (2008), 157–196 (especially, 162 for the dating of VM 1.); and see Shaw, above, ch. 4.

2   Van Dam, *Saints*, 91: "His entrance into and then his promotion up the ecclesiastical hierarchy neatly corresponded to a sequence of illnesses." I am greatly indebted to the rich discussion Van Dam gives to introduce his translations of Gregory's *miracula*.

opening discounts Gregory's agency in his acquiring of the position. It was divine assistance, not his deservedness ("non meo merito"), that got him selected. In pinpointing his unworthiness for ecclesiastical advancement, Gregory cited his moral foulness ("conscientia teterrimus") and the pervasiveness of his sins ("peccatis obvolutus"). Of course, besides God's help, he could have mentioned as well the assistance of Frankish royalty in his questionable elevation to the episcopal rank.[3] But even if Gregory had a clear conscience regarding the role of political connections in his unexpected promotion, we would be mistaken to take the remark about his corruption as a token of false contriteness. Sin was as real to Gregory as dysentery.

When the symptoms hit, the bishop was at a *villa*, not yet settled in to the episcopal residence of his see. With him, as the disorder was running its course, were a doctor named Armentarius and an anonymous deacon. Unable to eat, feverish, and with piercing intestinal pain, he first tried medicinal treatment. It was of no use. On the verge of death, a point mentioned three times, he asked the deacon to obtain dust from Saint Martin's tomb. What happened next is typical for this collection of texts:

> He brought back some of the sacred dust that they mixed [in water] and gave me to drink. As soon as I drank it all the pain vanished, and I received my health from the tomb. The assistance available at the tomb was so effective that after this [cure] had occurred at the third hour, on the same day at the sixth hour I was healthy and went for a meal. (*VM* 2.1)[4]

To frame the present inquiry, let us ask a basic though not easily answerable question. It is the sort of question that has worn thin. Nonetheless, it deserves to be posed for the sake of those coming fresh to Gregory's hagiography as well as those already familiar with it, since the answer registers how far we have come in our approach, while also suggesting directions in which to go.[5] The question is this: how should we handle an account in which the narrator asserts that the ingestion of saintly tomb dust saved his life? The first step in

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3 On the canonical irregularities of Gregory's consecration and the likely delay in taking his post, see Edward James, *The Origins of the France: From Clovis to the Capetians 500–1000* (London, 1982), 51; Van Dam, *Saints*, 62–64; Ian Wood, "The Individuality of Gregory of Tours," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden, 2002), 43; idem, *Gregory of Tours* (Bangor, 1994), 8–11.

4 Translations of the *VM* are from Van Dam's *Saints*, which follow the section numbers of Krusch's Latin edition.

5 See Peter Brown, "Gregory of Tours: Introduction," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (ed.) Mitchell/Wood (Leiden, 2002), 1.

formulating a response entails excluding certain explanations. For instance, to regard his account as concocted does not seem to do justice to the corroborating evidence, not to mention the labor of its production. After all, Gregory wrote countless, similar reports. Such work would have been onerous, a massive investment for a man deeply involved in the pressing events of his age; and we can hardly say that most bishops of his era included hagiographical composition among their duties.[6] Why would making up miracle stories be so deserving an enterprise, especially if, as we shall see shortly, not everyone in his day readily accepted such accounts? Why not go fishing, a pastime Gregory seems to have enjoyed, instead of writing dubious anecdotes?[7] Let us, therefore, exclude mendacity as a factor.[8] In recording such an abundance of miracles, Gregory undertook an enterprise that was laborious, perhaps frustrating at times, for tracking down testimony on cures at a shrine could be a challenging affair, especially if witnesses sneaked out before questioning (*VM* 3.45). It makes sense, then, even if the matter cannot ever be resolved definitively, to start this discussion by regarding Gregory as an earnest reporter, regardless of whatever factors, especially the artistry of slanting material to fit his worldview, were at work in his reporting.[9]

But we may say more about both excluding answers and establishing grounds on which to base our inquiry. Categorically dismissing such accounts runs counter to a basic insight from the sociology of religion: "The most barbarous rites and the strangest myths translate some human need…Fundamentally,

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6 See J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings and Other Studies in Frankish History* (London, 1962), 55. Danuta Shanzer, "So many saints – so little time…the *Libri Miraculorum* of Gregory of Tours," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 13 (2003), 20, regards "Gregory's hagiographical activities" as relatively "unusual"; for a qualification on this question, see Van Dam, *Saints*, 138.

7 See *VM* 2.16, with Van Dam, *Saints*, 260 n.73.

8 For an earlier tendency viewing hagiography as "ecclesiastical swindling-literature" (*kirchliche Schwindelliteratur*), see Marc Van Uytfanghe, "Les avatars contemporains de l"'hagiologie,'" *Francia* 5 (1977), 647, with Paul Fouracre, "Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography," *Past and Present* 127 (1990), 5 n. 5. The situation has changed considerably: see Patrick Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1994), 9–1; see also the engaging article by Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative," *Viator* 25 (1994), 95–113; and now Peter Turner, *Truthfulness, Realism, Historicity: A Study in Late Antique Spiritual Literature* (Burlignton, VT, in press), 8–10, and "Part 1: Hagiography a Truth Telling Genre?" At the time of my writing, I had access only to portions of this forthcoming work through the publisher's website (http://www.ashgate.com).

9 See Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge, 2001), 36.

then, there are no religions that are false."[10] Durkheim's observation, even if we reject the conclusion he ultimately draws from it, offers a premise for thinking about Gregory's accounts. Something must be compelling about these sorts of stories, and it is up to us to discover what that is. Along such lines, there is another reason for checking our dismissal: enough scholarly literature now exists that studies 'faith healings' and similar phenomena not only from the perspective of the historical conditions that would have rendered such occurrences 'real,' but also from the vantage point of contemporary psychological and cultural studies.[11] This research, as one of Gregory's most innovative expositors shows, tends to validate rather than discount such experiences.[12]

To continue with the excluding of explanations, perhaps we might be tempted to resolve the question by seeing Gregory's pre-modern world through the lenses of a post-Enlightenment one. Handled in this way, Gregory's religion need not be taken too seriously, for the passage just quoted may be regarded as evidence of the author's gullibility in a pre-scientific age.[13] But for different reasons that position also falters. Gregory himself indicates that some of his own contemporaries doubt his stories. Indeed, he shows himself to be intensely conscious of detractors, who call a whole saintly tradition into question (*VM* 1 prol.; 2.32). In recording Martin's miracles, Gregory followed hagiographical predecessors going all the way back to Sulpicius Severus (ca 360–ca 420), who claimed to know the saint.[14]

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10   Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York, 1995), 2.

11   For a critical survey of the interpretive possibilities, see Van Dam, *Saints*, 84–86; see also, in general, Aline Rousselle, *Croire et guérir: La foi en Gaule dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 1990).

12   Especially illuminating for its use of contemporary theoretical literature is the work of Giselle de Nie; see the several stimulating pieces collected in *Word, Image and Experience: Dynamics of Miracle and Self-Perception in Sixth-Century Gaul* (Burlington, VT, 2003); when referring to these articles I cite their reprint no. in the Variorum Collected Studies Series (CS 771). Also groundbreaking with respect to our understanding of Gregory's world is de Nie's earlier *Views From a Many-Windowed Tower: Studies of Imagination in the Works of Gregory of Tours* (Amsterdam, 1987).

13   See Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event, 1000–1215* (London, 1982), 2–19; for an earlier critique of the modern outlook toward medieval miracles, with special attention given to the theory of miracles underlying Gregory's writings, see Frantisek Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger: Studien zur Hagiographie des Merowingerzeit* (Prague, 1965), 43–45.

14   See Van Dam, *Saints*, 142–43; idem, "Images of Saint Martin in Late Roman and Early Merovingian Gaul," *Viator* 19 (1988), 1–27. On the Martin literature, still standard is the work of Clare E. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1983).

Doubting detractors loom over this history.[15] What is more, as he shows else-where, especially when describing his shifting interpretation of what he per-ceives, Gregory, like many of his contemporaries, could restrain credulity.[16] Skepticism had its entrenched place in 6th-century Gaul; so did its related responses to the holy, such as sacrilege or neglect of religious duties, especially when, with respect to the latter, urgent worldly matters (such as livestock escap-ing through a fence on a Sunday) took precedence over ecclesiastical obliga-tions.[17] In short, what Gregory reveals about doubt is arresting.[18] "Martin," as a Jew allegedly told a sick pilgrim, "will be of no use to you, because the dirt press-ing down [on him in his tomb] has made him into dirt" (*VM* 3.50). Even one of Gregory's own priests expressed strong reservations about the likelihood of a future bodily resurrection.[19]

As for the issue of scientific thinking, we need not discuss Gregory's work involving astronomical matters, for the passage at hand illustrates well enough the role of reason.[20] As the initial turn to the doctor makes clear, the 'miracle,'

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15   See Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogus* 3.3, (ed.) Charles Halm, CSEL 1, 200–01. The polemics are long-lasting: see Christian Tornau, "Intertextuality in Early Latin Hagiography: Sulpicius Severus and the *Vita Antonii*," in *Studia Patristica* 35, (eds.) M.F. Wiles and E.J. Yarnold (Leuven, 2001), 158 n. 2, for references to the dispute between E. – Ch. Babut and Hippolyte Delehaye concerning the historical value of Martin's *Vita*. After the publication of Jacques Fontaine's *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de Saint Martin* (Paris, 1967–1969), the debate was revisited by T.D. Barnes, "The Military Career of Martin of Tours," *Analecta Bollandiana* 114 (1996), 25–32, who again cast doubts on Sulpicius' account.

16   See de Nie's discussion regarding the perceptual and interpretive processes at work in Gregory's encounter with an oil lamp: "A Broken Lamp or the Effluence of Holy Power? Common Sense and Belief-Reality in Gregory of Tours' Own Experience," in *Word, Image and Experience*, as at n. 11, no. VI: 269–79.

17   Ian Wood discusses many of the examples with ample citations to the scholarly literature: "How Popular was Early Medieval Devotion?" *Essays in Medieval Studies* 14 (1997), <http://www.illinoismedieval.org/ems/emsv14.html>; idem, "Early Merovingian Devotion in Town and Country," in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, (ed.) Derek Baker (Oxford, 1979), 61–76.

18   See Goffart, *Narrators*, 137, with Graus, *Volk*, 451–55.

19   Only after a long argument does Gregory claim to have convinced the cleric: *Hist.* 10.13, with Henzelmann, *Gregory*, 81. For a recent discussion of this episode, see Peter Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2015). This book appeared just as the present chapter was about to go to press.

20   Gregory's *On the Course of the Stars* (CS) was meant to assist clergy in determining correct times for nocturnal offices. As noted by William C. McDermott, in *Monks, Bishops and Pagans: Christian Culture in Gaul and Italy 500–700,* (ed.) E. Peters (Philadelphia, 1975), 207, "Gregory's data are surprisingly accurate."

if that is what we should call the incident described above, operates on rational grounds. This is what one modern historian, mindful of another discipline's insight, argues when speaking of Gregory's experimentation with remedies:

> Clearly there were at least two possible paths to a cure: the rational, traditional one of medicine, and the equally rational one of divine help. There are also evidenced in his writings at least two contemporary – and one might think, if it were not for Evans-Pritchard and modern anthropology, two conflicting – explanations of disease...Gregory uses Galenic terminology and may have believed in Galenic explanations of illness; yet illness could also...be a result of the action of demons or a punishment for sin.[21]

Put differently, there is at work a cogent response to his dysentery, not only in the use of the doctor, but also in the discernible logic of ingesting saintly dust to abate internal symptoms. Gregory, as he shows in other cases, applies the relic to the infirmed part of the body. Thus this intestinal disorder requires swallowing the dust, while a headache finds relief from a relic's contact to the temples.[22]

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21 Edward James, "A Sense of Wonder: Gregory of Tours, Medicine and Science," in *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Commemoration of Denis L.T. Bethell*, (ed.) Marc Anthony Meyer (London, 1993) 57. He concludes (at 60) by saying of Gregory: "his attitude was a scientific or, at the very least, a proto-scientific one." As for the physician's role in the story, James notes (at 54) that doctors appear several times in Gregory's works, though often as "fall-guys." On the issue, he quotes (at 57) the insightful observation of Valerie I.J. Flint, "The Early Medieval 'Medicus,' the Saint – and the Enchanter," *Social History of Medicine* 2 (1989), 136: "the role of the fall-guy...can only be played by a figure whose place in the public's attention...is certain. It is a painful, but at the same time a sure, attestation of social worth. If the hagiographer gives him such a status, then his status as healer must have been in general high. It may have been...higher in fact than that of the saints in the contemporary community. Such a state of affairs would account to some extent for the gloating over the physician's failures."

22 In one case of headache Gregory drank the water from a spring near Julian's shrine as well as "soaked" his head (*VJ* 25). In a case of constipation, Gregory does not ingest anything but sensibly "presses the silk cloth above the tomb to his stomach," as noted in Brown, "Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours," in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1982), 241. Though there may be some variation, there is nonetheless an association between the relic's application and the afflicted body part. As Gregory says (*VM* 3, prol.): "For however often a headache has attacked, or a pounding has struck my temples, or my hearing has oppressed my ears, or a darkness has obscured the sight in my eyes, or a pain has appeared in other limbs, *as soon as I touched the painful part* [*of my body*] *either to the tomb or to the curtain hanging* [*there*]*, I immediately recovered my health*" (emphasis added). See also J.K. Kitchen, "Saints, Doctors, and Soothsayers: The Dynamics of Healing in Gregory of Tours' *De virtutibus sancti Martini*," *Florilegium* 12

Of course, as we shall see, the reference to sin in Gregory's account suggests that sickness and health entail more than physicality. In light of the religious overtones in such reports of cures as the one just presented, earlier specialists used to regard Gregory as naive. But more recent investigations, along the lines of the literature cited so far, have challenged such a characterization by taking up, rather than circumventing, the interpretive difficulties of Gregory's religion.

Therefore, after rehearsing the answers to the question, an obvious position comes into view, one indebted to the (contested) phenomenology of religion and related fields: we must give Gregory's accounts the chance to make their sense.[23] Such allowance entails an approach that tries to capture the ways in which the stories clothing his religion impart their "veridical" force.[24] To my mind, this kind of stance is what revived Gregory studies. The renewal happened because a different interpretive outlook gradually gave a forum for his religious expressions, whose cogency emerged as we discovered ways to listen. These ways found structure, consciously chosen rhetorical strategies, even a program at work in Gregory's writings.[25] To state the matter in another way, one that risks oversimplifying meticulous analyses, the most obvious and far-reaching shift in the study of Gregory's works amounts to letting his religion speak – however discordant it may seem to us – so that we can find its patterns. Succinctly capturing the nature of this change are the words of one who helped set the shift in motion: "Gregory's religion, the condition for the masterful hold he had on his present, is the most unsettling phenomenon he offers to our attention, and no one concerned with the Middle Ages can afford to pass it casually by."[26] What kept Gregory's worldview together jolted that of his modern

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(1993), 13, with Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (New York, 1990), 37–39.

23   Cf. John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco, 1998), xiii: "Trance and ecstasy, vision and apparition are perfectly normal and natural phenomena... They were recognized as such in the early first century... And only when their human normalcy is accepted can a proper response be offered. That response should not be, We deny the *fact* of your vision. It should be, Tell us the *content* of your vision. And then we will have to judge, not whether you had it or not, but whether we should follow it or not." For a sense of the debate over the phenomenology of religion (and positions like Crossan's), see Donald Wiebe, *The Politics of Religious Studies* (New York, 1999), 53–67.

24   Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), 112.

25   Heinzelmann's *Gregory* offers the most extensive guide to these developments and the scholarly literature that has led to the reassessment of Gregory.

26   Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), 234.

commentators, whose interpretations said more about their own mindset than that of Gregory. During the encounter, the invoking of such words as 'superstition,' 'naive,' and perhaps even 'supernatural' registered the careless bypassing that left his authorial voice harder to hear.[27]

Gregory, in having a masterful grasp on his times, was a man of this world; and he was a man of this world because he was so mindful of the one to come. What we call hagiography linked the two; and it is with hagiography that this chapter is primarily concerned.[28] To that end, let us first gain a sense of the contours marking his narratives on saints and their miracles. Once that is done, the specific aims and boundaries of our inquiry can come into focus.

11.2   Background, Sources and Goals

While the question of genre will be more directly addressed shortly, for now it is sufficient to say that the previously quoted miracle story represents one kind of narrative in Gregory's hagiographical corpus. In addition to such accounts, we also have saintly vignettes of a more or less biographical nature. Contrary to

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27   See James, "Sense of Wonder," 60; Goffart, *Narrators*, 132–33.

28   For a relatively recent and extensive study treating many of the hagiographical issues surveyed here, see Brigitte Beaujard, *Le culte des saints en Gaul: Les premiers temps. D'Hilaire de Poitiers à la fin du VI*[e] (Paris, 200); see also Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions & Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca, 2000), with the section on hagiography (pp. 169–223), citing many of the main studies and related literature. Since that publication, several extensive treatments by Martin Heinzelmann have addressed, in great detail and from a range of perspectives, early medieval hagiography in general and Gregory's in particular; see, for example: "L'hagiographie mérovingienne: Panorama des documents potentiels," in *L'hagiographie mérovingienne à travers ses réécritures*, (eds.) Monique Goullet, et al. (Ostfildern, 2010) 27–82; idem, "Grégoire de Tours et l'hagiographie mérovingienne," in *Gregorio Magno e l'agiografia fra IV e VII secolo*, (eds.) Antonella Degl'Innocenti, et al. (Florence, 2007), 155–192; idem, "La réécriture hagiographique dans l'oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours," in *La réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval: Transformations formelles et idéologiques*, (eds.) Monique Goullet et Martin Heinzelmann (Ostfildern, 2003), 15–70; idem, "Der Funktion des wunders in der spätantiken und frümittelalterlichen Historiographie," in *Mirakel im Mittelalter: Konzeptionen, Erscheinungsformen, Deutungen*, (eds.) Martin Heinzelmann, et al. (Stuttgart, 2002), 23–61; also useful for briefly surveying themes related to hagiography and Gregory is his "L'hagiographie de Grégoire de Tours: le fondement théologique de l'hagiographie médiévale," in *Les saints et l'histoire: Sources hagiographiques du haut Moyen Âge*, (ed.) Anne Wagner (Rosny-sous-Bois, 2004), 33–50, with a helpful introduction addressing key points in the field by Michèle Gaillard, "Saints et hagiographie," 8–28.

what we might expect from sources well known for their 'monochrome' quality, Gregory's portraits of holy people are remarkably colorful.[29] We find both men and women (one wearing a male disguise), as well as chaste lovers united at death in adjacent tombs.[30] There are bishops and abbots, denizens of the cities and of the wilderness, those of high social status and those of low, the learned and the illiterate.[31] There are those who, before consecrating themselves to the religious life, have marriages and children, while others reject conjugal ties or, to be more accurate, prefer Christ as their bridegroom.[32] While

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29   Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les passions de martyrs et les genres littéraires* (Brussels, 1921), 46.

30   Shanzer, "So many saints," 23, notes that Gregory "was not...interested in holy women –
      particularly not in named ones (Monegund and Radegund are notable exceptions)." But
      see *GM* 48 (where the female martyrs of Lyon are named); for several other examples of
      holy women, almost all of whom are named, see: *GC* 5, 16, 18, 33, 42, 63, 102; *GM* 5, 37, 50,
      90. For a reassessment of Gregory's attitude toward women, see de Nie, "Is a Woman a
      Human Being? Precept, Prejudice and Practice in Sixth-Century Gaul," in *Word, Image
      and Experience*, (I) 1–26; especially intriguing in this regard, and with observations on
      Gregory, is Albert Demyttenaere, "The Cleric, Women and the Stain: Some Beliefs and
      Ritual Practices Concerning Women in the Early Middle Ages," in *Frauen in Spätantike
      und Frühmittelalter*, (ed.) Werner Affeldt (Sigmaringen, 1990), 141–65. Regarding the
      woman disguised as a man, see the story of Papula, *GC* 16; on female saints and 'cross-
      dressing,' see John Anson, "The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and
      Development of a Motif," *Viator* 5 (1974), 1–32; Evelyne Patlagean, "L'Histoire de la femme
      déguisée en moine et l'évolution de la sainteté féminine à Byzance," *Studi Medievali* 17
      (1976), 597–623; more recently, Patricia Cox Miller, "Is There a Harlot in This Text?
      Hagiography and the Grotesque," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33/3
      (2003), 419–35; for a broader treatment of such issues within a contemporary theoretical
      framework, see Kristi Upson-Saia, *Early Christian Dress: Gender, Virtue, and Authority*
      (New York, 2011). For the story of the chaste lovers: *GC* 31, *Hist.* 1.47; see also *GC* 74.

31   The above refers mostly to saints represented in the *VP*, whose *Incipit* lists six bishops,
      twelve abbots, four recluses and one nun; on the *VP*'s inclusion of saints from "all classes
      of society," see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 176, who gives a succinct analysis of the work at
      174–78; on the saints of the *VP* who learn to read, see Kitchen, *Saints Lives and the Rhetoric
      of Gender: Male and Female in Merovingian Hagiography* (New York, 1998), 94–95.

32   Gregory of Langres, a great-grandfather of Gregory of Tours, "had a wife...whom he only
      approached...for the sake of having children" (*VP* 7.1); he became a bishop after she died
      (for the genealogy: Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 7, 13, 12); Monegund's two daughters "brought
      her a profound joy," but their deaths led to her leaving her husband and entering the reli-
      gious life (*VP* 19.2); Lupicinus is forced into marriage, but then flees (*VP* 1.1); Gallus takes
      the tonsure to avoid the marriage his father arranged (*VP* 6.1); Patroclus resists his moth-
      er's attempt to secure him a marriage (*VP* 9.1); Venantius "love[d] the young girl" his parents
      intended for him, but he preferred monasticism after visiting Martin's church (*VP* 16.1);
      for other hagiographical examples: Graus, *Volk*, 472–77. On flight from marriage as a motif

most are saints from an early age, one even born with a "quasi-tonsure," blemishes such as pride and cowardice occasionally surface.[33] Relatively rare but telling are those characters who, though having saintly potential, unfortunately binge drink and go mad, unable to merit the name *sanctus*.[34] But for the most part, and as audiences would expect from stories in which the heroes are saints, those who do fall manage to resume their quest for paradise.[35]

Thus there is a splendid diversity to Gregory's portraits of holy people. At the same time, it is important to remember that in his *Life of the Fathers* (*VP*), Gregory also sees a bond between saints no matter how various their "virtues and merits." As he explains in a sentence scholars often cite for its theological suggestiveness, the title's grammatical use of the singular *vita* is justified when speaking of saints, because "one life of the body sustains them all in this world."[36] With respect to Gregory himself, several of the twenty-three saints in this collection are connected in another way too: "Three were [Gregory's]

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of early hagiography, see Allison Elliott, *Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of the Early Saints* (Hanover, PA, 1987), 81–102. For saints taking Christ as their spouse (*sponsus*): *VP* 2, prol.

33   Tonsured: *VP* 7.1, with Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 176, n. 74, who also emphasizes (at 177) the rarity of conversions later in life; pride: *VP* 15 (discussed later); cowardice: Romanus and Lupicinus, after "fear[ing] daily attacks of the Enemy," temporarily return home (*VP* 1.1); Gallus, attempting to burn down "a temple…where the barbarians…adored idols," flees to escape retaliation: "The blessed man used to tell this often, with tears, adding 'Woe is me for not having stood My ground, so that I might have ended my life in this cause'" (*VP* 6.2). Unless otherwise stated, translations of the *VP* are taken from Edward James, *Gregory of Tours: Life of the Fathers* (Liverpool, 1985).

34   Gregory gives descriptions of 'saint-like' people (*Hist.* 8.34, 10.31, *VM* 2.53) whose minds and, at times, promising religious lives deteriorate due to immoderate drinking; see also Heinzelmann, Gregory, 170, n.60. For insights on excess from the perspective of purity and pollution, see de Nie, "The Body, Fluidity and Personal Identity in the World of Gregory of Tours," in *Word, Image and Experience*, (II) 7. On the question of what constitutes a saint and sanctity, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 170–71, who also states (at 178): "Gregory did not limit sainthood to 'canonized' saints…potentially it encompassed the entire community of believers."

35   See Elliott, *Roads*, 7–8.

36   *VP*, praef. The passage is widely noticed: Marc Van Uytfanghe, "L'hagiographie en Occident de la *Vita Antonii* aux *Dialogues* de Grégoire le Grand: Genèse et occupation du terrain," in *Gregorio Magno e l'agiografia fra* IV *e* VII *secolo*, (eds.) Antonella Degl'Innocenti, et al. (Florence, 2007), 42; Heinzelmann, "L'hagiographie mérovingienne: Panorama des documents potentiels," 65; idem, *Gregory*, 174; for several other instances in the earlier scholarly literature discussing the sentence, see Kitchen, *Saints' Lives*, 209, n.200.

kinsmen, ten of them acquaintances."[37] One of Gregory's modern commentators also notes another characteristic of the holy people described in this bishop's writings. Whether they are famous or anonymous, whether they are personally know to him or are somebody he only heard or read of, Gregory's saints, unlike Sulpicius' Martin, are dead by the time he writes of them.[38]

As for their wondrous relics, which are the earthly conduits of intercessory power that substitute for saintly presence, these also have a wide-ranging multiplicity to them. As suggested from the opening passage, once in contact with saints, all sorts of matter – dust from a tomb, clothing shreds, splinters, plant shoots, bits of wall blotched with a hermit's bloody spittle, and other kinds of mundane objects raised by saintly contact to the status of holy fragments – may release the power, *potentia*, through which miracles occur.[39] Besides the influence they exercise externally through physical remains, the 'friends of God' may also enter the interior realm of the living, whose dreams and visions include the advice and admonishments of saintly messengers (e.g., VM 1.35, VJ 9, GC 39).

The abundant displays of such diffusive holy power leave us with the impression that Gregory's saints touched virtually all aspects of life. As his writings assert, when the need arose, saints could cure the sick, punish the wicked, replenish the poor and hungry, free prisoners and slaves, save the suicidal, confound Jews and Arians, control the weather and even garner the respect of animals.[40] To be sure, the list of what saints did is long. As we might expect

37 Conrad Leyser, "'Divine Power Flowed from this Book': Ascetic Language and Episcopal Authority in Gregory of Tours' *Life of the Fathers*," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, 286.

38 See Brown, "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: A Parting of the Ways," in *Society and the Holy,* 185. However, Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 171, argues that "the modern delimitation of living and dead saints…is of only limited value for recording sixth-century spirituality."

39 Cf. Goffart, *Narrators*, 135; bloody spittle: VP 13.2; *potentia*: Brown *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981), 106–27.

40 An inscription at Martin's church (see Van Dam, *Saints*, 314) sums up the saint's clients (e.g. "blind," "sick," "disabled," "oppressed," "needy" etc.). Other studies and sources (the latter not exhaustively cited) are given according to the order above. Cures: Van Dam, *Saints*, 86, notes "blindness, paralysis and lameness" as the most common ailments treated at Martin's tomb; see also Goffart, *Narrators*, 142, n.137; punishments: see above n.17; poor and hungry: Sara McGonagle, "The Poor in Gregory of Tours: A Study of the Attitude Toward the Poor as Reflected in the Literature of the Time," PhD diss., Columbia University, 1937; prisoners and slaves: Graus, "Die Gewalt bei den Anfänge des Feudalismus und die 'Gefangenenbefreiung' der merowingischen Hagiographie," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 1 (1961), 611–56; suicidal: GM 28; Jews: GM 9, 21; GC 95; Arians: GM 12, 24–25, 80–81; weather: Paul Edward Dutton, "Observations on Early Medieval Weather in

from what has already been stated, in addition to their intervention, Gregory's saints, like those before and after his time, also offered examples of an outstanding Christian existence, religious models that built up faith (though the church's goal of edification did not preclude the possibility that such stories also entertained readers and listeners).[41] Thus, as the author of a massive literary corpus that commemorates holy people as both living embodiments of Christian virtues and as posthumous heavenly mediators for the community of believers, Gregory left a lasting mark on the history of hagiography.

The form in which the holy are remembered also reveals certain functions of such commemoration: saints and their miracles survive as stories; the hagiographical process, which consists of the composing, reading and hearing of such stories, keeps the holy alive.[42] As Gregory tells them, these stories exude vitality.[43] His saints are light.[44] They keep existence "ethically functional" and humanity worth saving.[45] Indeed, to the extent that it presupposes the swaying of a god's will by mediators at heaven's court, while also promoting the festive commemoration of such special dead, hagiography aligns with literature in the comic, rather than tragic, mode.[46] As stories, saints always win, especially when martyred or worn out through ascetic self-denial. But the process is not all about the saints. If the victory is in the telling, then the tellers, along with their listeners, share in the glory. The saint's earthly afterlife as narrative addresses the needs, including moral ones, and desires of the hagiographers

General, Bloody Rain in Particular," in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe*: *New Directions in Early Medieval Studies*, (eds.) Jennifer R. Davis and Michael McCormick (Aldershot, 2008), 167–80; animals: *VJ* 31 (an excellent example of their "tameness" when entering Julian's shrine), *GC* 8, 33; and see now, with reference to both Gregory and the scholarly literature on 'animal miracles,' Albrecht Diem, "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity: Jonas of Bobbio and the End of the Holy Man," *Speculum* 82 (2007), 542. I am most grateful to Dr. Diem for his sharing of many ideas with me regarding hagiography and Gregory of Tours.

41 On edification and Gregory's hagiography, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory* 172–81; for edification as hagiography's aim, see Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. V.M. Crawford (London, 1961), 3. On humor in Gregory, see: Goffart, *Narrators*, 151 n. 170; Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 48–50; Henzelmann, *Gregory*, 91.

42 Venantius Fortunatus, Gregory's contemporary, writes the *Vita sancti Marcelli*, MGH AA 4.2, 50, so that the saint will not be lost to the "wind of oblivion" (*ventus oblivionis*).

43 Cf. Heinzelmann, "L'hagiographie mérovingienne: Panorama des documents potentiels," 65.

44 See de Nie, *Views From a Many-Windowed Tower*, 133–211.

45 Aviad Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word: Saints' Stories and the Western Imagination*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), xi.

46 See Hayden White, *The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, 1973), 9, 403.

and their audiences.[47] This vitality, this edification of Christian communities through saintly narratives, is most apparent when put in the context of Gregory's historical conditions.

By the time he became a bishop, the world of 6th-century Gaul had undergone significant changes. Imperial administration had given way to competing Frankish rulers, with bishops playing powerful roles in the shaping of a new society.[48] Political and ecclesiastical factionalism reached into Gregory's life. His brother Peter, a deacon, died in a feud.[49] Gregory himself had to go before King Chilperic, when plotting rivals accused him of slandering Queen Fredegund.[50] His see of Tours, moreover, was vulnerable territory, boarding on three kingdoms.[51] Troublesome, too, were the asylum-seekers drawn to the famous pilgrimage site under Gregory's jurisdiction, the church of Saint Martin, where fugitives overdid their stay.[52]

To continue in this vein by taking a somewhat wider historical gaze: however much the Merovingians might have re-shaped Roman Gaul, Gregory's era was not yet, at least by one famous though contested reckoning, 'medieval.'[53] As is well known, in addition to being considered a 'late' phase of antiquity, this period has also been described in rhetorical images whose value is questionable; and even historians who no longer view this time as 'barbarous' use phrases suggestive of pronounced decline or cultural ambiguity. Thus the period has been envisaged as a 'dark age,' or as the 'twilight of the West' or a 'long morning.'[54] Certainly, Gregory himself highlights in his writings events of great change and hardship, including civil wars, plagues and even the

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47   On the question of hagiography and ethics, see Edith Wyschogrod, *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy* (Chicago, 1990).

48   See Van Dam, *Saints*, 3; Heinzelmann, "Grégoire de Tours et l'hagiographie mérovingienne," 155; James, *Origins*, 49.

49   Goffart, *Narrators*, 210.

50   Van Dam, *Saints*, 70–71, Henizelmann, *Gregory*, 90, refers to the period between January 576 and Autumn 580 as a "time of constant personal danger."

51   Van Dam, *Saints*, 64.

52   Ian Wood, *Gregory of Tours* (Bangor, 1994), 13.

53   Gregory of Tours is crucial to the argument of Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, trans. B. Miall (New York, 1939), with Brown, "*Mohammed and Charlemagne* by Henri Pirenne," in *Society and the Holy*, 76.

54   For reflections on the rhetoric designating the period, see: Julia M.H. Smith, *Europe after Rome: A New Cultural History 500–1000* (Oxford, 2005), 1; Jennifer R. Davis and Michael McCormick, *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe*, 1; C. Warren Hollister, "Twilight in the West," in *The Transformation of the Roman World: Gibbon's Problem after Two Centuries*, (ed.) Lynn White, Jr. (Berkeley, 1966), 179–205; Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton, 1993), 11–12.

devastation sometimes brought on by harsh weather.[55] Yet saints also emerged in this world as constant and reliable intercessors. As suggested by one of the groundbreaking thinkers looking at the interconnectedness of religion and society in the Late Roman and early medieval periods, this age was marked by saintly patrons protecting the vulnerable, who were seeking not just sound-ness of body and release from oppressive circumstances, but also salvation.[56] To condense Gregory's immense literary output into a motto singling out these patrons, let us say that over the calamities he himself narrates, we can hear a steady call: 'Trust the saints.' This is what he seems to be saying, one way or another, over and over. Obviously, the sheer volume of writing proclaiming his message indicates that these are stories Gregory thought his community needed hearing in strong doses.[57] What is more, the reassurance and encour-agement offered through hagiography would have been bolstered by the communal rituals in which the liturgical commemoration of saints occurred. On such occasions, the power of the holy became especially felt, releasing the sick, possessed and otherwise burdened from their plight, in the presence of

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55   For a summary of Gregory's observations on the weather, destruction of crops and meteo-rological phenomena, see the introduction to the translation of the *Histories* by Lewis Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours: The History of the Franks* (Harmondsworth, 1974), 50–52, with more extensive comments by Dutton, "Observations on Early Medieval Weather," 167–80.

56   Brown, "Learning and the Imagination," in *Society and the Holy*, 15: "The saint was the *patronus*, the protector, with whom it was desirable to enter into a client relationship." Similarly (at 16): "The shape that late Roman men decided, in no uncertain terms, to give to their saints was that of the *patronus*." See especially, idem, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," in *Society and the Holy,* pp, 103–52, with the author's important reappraisal: "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971–1997," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6.3 (1998), 353–76. Taking up Brown's ideas on the saint as patron and applying them to Gregory's hagiography is John H. Corbett, "The Saint as Patron in the Work of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Medieval History* 7 (1981), 1–13; idem, "'*Praesentium signorum munera*': The Cult of the Saints in the World of Gregory of Tours," *Florilegium* 5 (1983), 44–61; idem, "Changing Perceptions in Late Antiquity: Martin of Tour," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 3.2 (1987), 236–51. Many years ago, John Corbett used to meet with me each week to read aloud the Latin texts of Gregory and to discuss interpre-tive approaches to hagiography. For those sessions, and for much else he gave me, I thank my teacher, *ex imo corde*.

57   De Nie, "Caesarius of Arles and Gregory of Tours: Two Sixth-Century Gallic Bishops and 'Christian Magic,'" in *Word, Image and Experience*, as at n. 11, no. V, 196: "Saints, as persons with recognizable human faces, and every palpable thing around them, were evidently experienced as the most effective symbolic mediators of the divine in a period in which civilization probably seemed to have definitely crumbled."

onlookers honoring the saint's feast day.[58] Especially with the reporting of cures at Martin's shrine, the art of Gregory's hagiography and the life of Gregory's community mirrored each other.

Naturally, the worldly benefits coming from pilgrims grateful for the merciful intercession of divine patrons would also have provided an incentive for churchmen to promote saints.[59] Generally speaking, such benefits included the increase of ecclesiastical property and wealth, along with the enhancement of clerical status. But in addition to encouraging an anxious public's reliance on stable, if profitable, mediators between heaven and earth, Gregory's hagiographical works also expressed his affection for these *amici Dei.* The feelings saints and miracles aroused in him point to "intense relationships," the sort that bear on the debated question of the adequacy of the "two-tiered model" for explaining the cult of the saints.[60] In light of its representation in Gregory's hagiography, the veneration of the holy seems difficult to account for, as does the two-tiered model, as a movement just "from below," the effervescence of simple-minded religiosity coming from "the masses," with the elite disdainful of such enthusiasm for the special dead or, at best, reluctant participants in their cults.[61] Gregory's familial connection to Julian's shrine at Brioude; his references to himself as the "foster child" of Saints Julian, Ferreolus (*VJ* 2) and Andrew (*MA* 38); his mentioning of a private relic collection once belonging to his father and housed in an oratory he himself had built at Tours (*GC* 20, *GM* 83); his family's illustrious Christian pedigree; the intercessory healing power he himself repeatedly claims to have experienced; and his promotion of

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58   On miracles taking place as people watched, see, for example, *VM* 2.7, 14, 29, 49, with Corbett, "Saint as Patron," 9; for anxious congregations hoping to see cures at times of political uncertainty, see Van Dam, *Saints* 233, n. 54, 241, n. 60.

59   O.M. Dalton, *The History of the Franks*, 1 (Oxford, 1927), 312: "Despite occasional efforts of kings to stay the process, the church grew richer and richer with the passage of time." Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (London, 1994), 87, notes the downside: "although a great cult may have brought in more than enough wealth to compensate for damage caused by those fleeing from the king's anger, that wealth could still attract the attention of would-be thieves. A major shrine was not an unequivocal blessing to its guardians."

60   Brown, "Learning and the Imagination," in *Society and the Holy*, 15; idem, *Cult of the Saints*, 12–22; for a critical reflection on Brown's resistance to the "two-tiered model," see Jacques Fontaine, "Le culte des saintes et ses implications sociologiques: Reflections sur un récent essai de Peter Brown," *Analecta Bollandiana* 100 (1982), 17–41.

61   Wood, "How Popular was Early Medieval Devotion?" (as at n. 17) states: "Gregory of Tours and his audience belonged to the same community of belief, and his works do not allow us to make any distinction between the religion of the élite and that of the lower orders."

shrines, especially Martin's, by an inquisitive, relentless gathering of testimony on their miracles – all these facets of Gregory's life show a leading figure of the period's culture who was groomed from childhood in long-standing and deeply personal bonds with saints. The diligent practice of hagiography sustained those bonds. Indeed, the creation of this literature played an enormous role in his life. Hagiographical composition was an intense and urgent activity for Gregory, a tender but heavy burden undertaken to fulfill a vow.[62] Especially telling is the characterization of this commitment to writing: bringing a hagiographical book to completion resembled a penitential pilgrimage.[63]

As expiating quests, Gregory's saintly narratives expressed his humility (which is hardly just a rhetorical *topos*), his consciousness of a fallen world, and his pressing concern with the question of his own salvation, a question entailing his hope of a bodily afterlife (*VM* 3.60). Hagiography, then, was a matter of the heart.[64] When trying, as many scholars have, to make sense of the prominence he gives to the miraculous, we can easily forget how often Gregory recounts his all too human tears, which his religion could not always quell with an easy consolation.[65] At the same time, in light of his personal and profoundly affective engagement with his work, his remarkable literary productivity and the obvious relish with which he relates certain accounts, it is also apparent that Gregory took genuine delight in hearing, reciting and writing down saintly narratives.[66] They lifted him and, presumably, others too. In his hands hagiography was redemptive pleasure.

In delineating the scope of his writing on saints, the sources that are ostensibly hagiographical offer the obvious place to focus. But such concentration is not without its drawback. Researchers who have thoroughly examined the rhetorical strategies at work throughout Gregory's entire literary corpus have demonstrated that the *Histories* is also deeply marked by hagiographical themes. Though "obviously different in design," the hagiography and the *Histories* "are profoundly similar in quality and sound."[67] Even when focused on Gregory's most studied work, the more inclusive investigations have tried to uncover the underlying unity of the whole collection, a unity Gregory himself defends by cursing any future redactors intent on chopping up his books

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62   See Van Dam, *Saints*, 142.

63   Ibid., 146.

64   See Corbett, *Saint as Patron*, 2.

65   *VM* 1.32, 2.25, 3.1, 4.30; Gregory and the rest of the mourners are virtually inconsolable at Radegund's funeral: *GC* 104; see also *Hist*. 5.34, with Van Dam, *Saints*, 81.

66   See *VM* 3.8, 4.18, 4.31.

67   Goffart, *Narrators*, 113.

(*Hist.* 10.31). This scholarship pointing to the interconnectedness of the *Histories* and the hagiography offers current researchers a fruitful path to continue pursuing in future expositions.

However, given the abundance of hagiography requiring consideration here, the *Histories* will not figure prominently. At the same time, as far as the question of differences "in design" goes, it is important to emphasize that the demarcation just proposed is grounded in Gregory's own understanding of his hagiography as a class of literature distinct from that of the *Histories*. In addition, Gregory himself tends, though not with complete consistency, to maintain the distinction between saintly wonders (*miracula* and *virtutes*) and saintly lives (*vitae*). He observes this distinction most obviously when cataloguing his works in the last chapter of his *Histories*. There he lists the collection of *Lives* (*VP*) as a different kind of literary production than the narratives of postmortem miracles. Yet he departs from this position in another reckoning; here he does include the *VP* among the "eight books of wonders."[68] But even if he is not consistent in his view of this work's place within his literary corpus, there are still several other instances in which boundaries between different types of literary compositions are maintained, especially at moments when the content of one work begins to overlap with that of another, the sort of occurrence that leads to Gregory's cross-referencing.[69] Therefore, we have

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68   *GC*, prol.: "In the first book [*GM*] I therefore included some of the miracles of the Lord, the holy apostles, and the other martyrs. These miracles had been unknown until now, [but] God deigned to increase them daily to strengthen the faith of believers. For it was surely improper that they disappear from memory. In a second book [*VJ*] I wrote about the miracles of St. Julian. I wrote four books [*VM* 1–4] about the miracles of St. Martin, and a seventh [*VP*] abut the life of some blessed [saints]. I am writing this eighth book about the miracles of the confessors." Translations of the *Gloria confessorum* are from Van Dam, *Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Confessors* (Liverpool, 1988).

69   On the issue of categorizing the *VP*, Gregory's own prefacing remarks to that work are important: "I had decided to write only about what has been achieved with divine help at the tombs of the blessed martyrs and confessors. But I have recently discovered information about those who have been raised to heaven by the merit of their blessed conduct here below, and I thought that their way of life, which is known to us through reliable sources, could strengthen the Church." Of course, sometimes the occasion calls for Gregory to disregard distinctions of genre. Notice what he says in *GC* 44, where he considers Saint Severinus: "For although I already said in the preface of this book that I would record only those events that God deigned to work after the death of his saints at their intercession, nevertheless I do not think it absurd if I recall a few events from the life of those about whom I know nothing has been written." For the larger religious context and tensions related to Gregory's comments here, see Heinzelmann, "L'hagiographie mérovingienne: Panorama des documents potentiels," 41. As for Gregory's cross-referencing, it is especially

grounds for treating his hagiography according to two types: episodic miracle stories, which narrate a saint's posthumous deeds of power, especially those occurring at tombs or through relics, and the more biographical material that delineates the events of a holy person's life. Of course, even in *vitae* postmortem miracles are typically recounted. The difference, then, between the two rests on a temporal orientation and the overall content of the material included: one kind of source highlights deeds occurring *after* the saint's death, with participants in the cult assuming prominence; the other narrates events that happened *during* the saint's life, with the conduct of the holy person while he or she was alive given initial importance. Thus Gregory's own acknowledged, if not always maintained, division between wonders and lives marks out a path on which to embark.

To outline that path, some remarks on the stages and aims of our treatment are in order. Our discussion first considers Gregory's *Libri I–IV de virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, his largest collection of miracle stories (11.3). This work shows a thriving 6th-century cult in an urban setting ("Martinopolis" as it later came to be called);[70] and it is a cult in which Gregory, as bishop of Tours, had a great stake, for his position entailed supervising, promoting and protecting the region's most popular pilgrimage site. Arising out of our initial examination of miracle stories will be observations on the function of this shrine and its related hagiography in Gregory's society. When considering the question of function, our investigation will follow the lead of other studies informed by scholarly literature on symbols and rituals as tools for managing the crises of life.[71] Turning from the miracle stories to the more biographical narratives of the *VP*, we shall find that this collection presents us with different kinds of questions, namely, the way Gregory's biblical tradition and his understanding of salvation history weave themselves into the narrative of a saint's life (11.4). At the same time, the *VP* also bears on the issue of religious authority and the tensions that arose among the various practitioners of the Christian life (11.5).

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apparent in the *Histories*, for example: *Hist.* 4.36, 50, 8.2, 9.2; see also Goffart, *Narrators*, 124, n.55, 128, n.69, 127; and above, ch. 4.

70   Van Dam, *Saints*, 129.

71   For a survey of some of this literature, see Kitchen, "Going Medieval: Paradigm Shifts and the Phenomenological Tendency in the Contemporary Encounter with Medieval Religion," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 14 (2002), 376–415; especially valuable with respect to the question of anthropology and the study of early medieval religion is Mayke de Jong, "The Foreign Past: Medieval Historians and Cultural Anthropology," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 109 (1996): 326–42.

As a way of trying to tie together *miracula* and *vitae*, the last part of our discussion will consider the significance of saintly presence in Gregory's religious landscape (11.6). This presence is portrayed vividly through descriptions that condense the physical and the ideal, the present and the future, in the image of the saint's radiant and sweetly-scented corpse, as solid as the tomb in which the splendor of the resurrection comes to life. Such scenes appear in the *Gloria martyrum* and, more often, the *Gloria confessorum*.[72]

Of course, all of Gregory's writings are important, but not all of them can be discussed here.[73] Instead, I focus on passages that illustrate central features of the hagiography, so that what is analyzed in particular will bear on Gregory's hagiography in general. No matter how repetitive Gregory's stories might seem to modern readers, the claim 'if you've read one saint's life [or miracle story] you've read them all' does not legitimize excluding sources. At the same time, this bishop, like the eloquent though sometimes long-winded Augustine, keeps coming back to his main points, which this discussion endeavors to capture.[74]

11.3   *Miracula:* The Healing Process

To consider the issue of the shrine's function, let us return briefly to the first account. In one important respect that narrative reveals a characteristic that virtually all the cures share: healing entails stages. It is a process, sometimes a very long one, with a structure to it. Certain features within this process appear most obviously. In more than one way, Gregory was on a threshold: he lingered between life and death as he made his transition to the episcopacy. Though he

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72   For the theme of resurrection in another work associated with Gregory (*Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium apud Ephesum*), see Heinzelmann "L'hagiographie mérovingienne: Panorama des documents potentiels," 49.

73   I leave virtually untouched the material on Saint Julian. For a translation of and valuable introductory comments on the *Liber de passione et virtutibus sancti Iuliani martyris*, see Van Dam, *Saints*, 41–49, 162–98. Regarding two other works not considered in this chapter, the *Liber de miraculis beati Andreae apostoli* and the *Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium apud Ephesum*, Goffart, *Narrators*, 129, states that these "were adaptations, lacking the originality of Gregory's other compositions." Nonetheless, Gregory's reworking of this material and its relationship to the rest of his corpus are matters worth pursuing, even though they are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this discussion.

74   James Earl "Literary Problems in Early Medieval Hagiography," PhD diss., Cornell University, 1971, 3, with Elliott, *Roads*, 2. On Augustine's long sermons, see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, new edition with an epilogue (Berkeley, 2000), 437.

had received his appointment, the illness came when he was not yet at his church. The aftermath of the cure is also telling, for the ending shows the social relevance of health. Just after being able to have food again, Gregory began to take his place in the new community. As he put it, "on the day after I recovered I went to mass on Sunday." Though still a little shaky (he has to ask one of the priests to celebrate the ceremony), Gregory nonetheless went to his church as the beneficiary of Martin's power. He thus punctuated his recovery by assuming his place in a public world. He had gone from languishing at a distance to the center of a major pilgrimage site, with Martin enabling the transition. There is, then, a pattern to the cure. The movement from sickness to health begins with the ill person being set apart and ends with his or her rejoining the community.

Turning to other accounts of illness, we notice a similar movement. This 'processual' aspect characterizing a substantial portion of Gregory's reports brings to mind the structure that certain anthropologists have identified when studying rites of passage and healing rituals. Particularly with cases involving cures at shrines, the stages of "separation, margin (or *limen*, signifying threshold…), and aggregation" mark Gregory's descriptions of the ordeal sufferers undergo.[75] As a way of illustrating this, let us consider one of the most revealing accounts Gregory gives in the *VM*.

This narrative concerns a deformed child, whom Gregory describes as "resembl[ing] more closely some monster than the appearance of a man" (*VM* 2.24). Blind, deaf and hideous in appearance, he is a social outcast, an object of ridicule, for which the boy's mother is blamed. Shame comes into play, arising from the violation of a purity regulation that is clearly related to the misfortune: the mother "wept and confessed that he had been conceived the night before a Sunday." Gregory notes that instead of killing the boy, the mother raised him. However, once grown, the young man was handed over to beggars who travelled with him on a wagon. This development marks the beginning of the separation phase. Removed from his community, he was put on display as a way for the other wandering poor to solicit alms. "This went on for a long time" before he arrived at Martin's tomb and was "thrown" (*proiectus*)

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75   Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process* (London, 1969), 94, who acknowledges his debt to Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (London, 1960). Bynum's critique of Turner's arguments in the context of medieval holy women would not seem to jeopardize the use of his categories to explicate healings at tombs, which correspond more closely to his field work and are indeed a 'ritual process'; see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1992), 27–51.

into the church. Once there he became part of the 'liminal' world of pilgrims mingling around the place where heaven and earth meet, the saint's *sepulchrum*.[76] He lay there before the tomb on two separate feast days over the course of a year. Especially evident, then, is the experience's duration, which underscores the cure as a 'process.' Indeed, because the first cure did not treat all the infirmities, there is a repetition of the separation and liminal phases designated by Gregory's temporal and spatial references to the boy's life as a beggar and as a threshold person at Martin's tomb:

> When he was eleven years old, the boy came to the festival of the blessed Martin. He was thrown inside [the church] and lay in misery before the tomb. At the conclusion of the festival he recovered his sight and his hearing. Then he returned to his usual occupation and requested alms. After almost a year or more he came to the festival [on November 11, 575] and was placed in the spot where he had lain previously; when the celebrations of the festival were completed, all his limbs were straightened, and he received his complete health. Lest these events perhaps seem unbelievable, [let me say that] I saw this boy after he was cured, and I learned about these events not secondhand from someone else but as they were told by his lips. (*VM* 2.24)

From the recurring features in Gregory's descriptions of behavior at the tomb, it is apparent that those who entered this 'betwixt-and-between' world of Martin's church performed certain rituals and related gestures.[77] These activities included prayer and fasting, vigils, sleeping at the spot, and even kissing the tomb.[78] Especially frequent are Gregory's references to the afflicted weeping and being placed at the feet (*ante pedes*) of Martin.

Of course, as we saw at the start, Gregory also portrays sufferers receiving cures at a distance, sometimes through a relic, though other accounts show that even a relic is not needed; faithful evoking of the saint is the crucial point, whether at a shrine or in peril of drowning at sea. Thus holy power can be felt in the presence of the saint or from a distance. But what the many descriptions

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76   See Brown, "Relics and Social Status," 225.

77   Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95. On the ritualized behavior, Corbett, "Saint as Patron," 8, states: "The careful reader of Gregory's account gets the clear impression that Gregory is describing a ritual of appeal."

78   Most of the behavior mentioned above is virtually ubiquitous in the *VM*; but for kissing the tomb, something less frequently mentioned, see the moving account of "The woman freed from a flow of blood" (*VM* 2.10).

of appeals at the tomb accentuate is an experience of space and time qualitatively different from that of ordinary existence. The deformed boy was "thrown" into another world. From what we can tell, it is one not only highly ritualized but also charged with symbols. In considering the textual and visual evidence, Raymond Van Dam offers a remarkably lucid account of the complex temporal and spatial signifiers at work during the liminal phase of healing. Notice, especially, the way symbols would have blurred the distinctions between past miracles (those of Scripture and of Martin) and current ones:

> Once inside the church the emphasis shifted to contact and mediation between heaven and earth. In the nave a set of murals depicted the foundation of the church at Jerusalem and the miracle of Jesus Christ's walking on water... The accompanying inscription invited visitors to request the saint's patronage: "if you doubt, look at the miracles before your eyes." The temporal ambiguity inherent in these instructions is most important, because visitors could see representations of biblical events and of the miracles that Bishop Martin had once performed while alive, as well as watch the current miracles that were happening in the church. To Gregory's mind, however, there was no difference between past and present, between biblical events, Bishop Martin's miracles, and St. Martin's miracles.[79]

For those who separated themselves from their normal communities to go to the basilica for cures, the third phase of the process emerges after the experience of Martin's power delivers them from their affliction. The aggregation, or reincorporation, of a person into family and community now comes into play. This is often represented quite tersely, as when Gregory concludes his account of a miracle by stating that once cured, the person returned home: "ad domum regressus est" (*VM* 2.6).[80] However, the reintegration sometimes entails more than a return to the place that was left when Martin's tomb was sought. Cured of blindness a woman marries and has children. Thus the story's conclusion is an obvious example of healing leading to the assumption of social norms (*VM* 1.19). But it is also important to note, even if this is not as common, the variation in the pattern, variation accounted for by the transformative effect of Martin's power, which could be more enticing than kin. Hence reintegration into

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79   Van Dam, *Saints*, 132.

80   Such examples appear throughout the *VM*, with slight variation – e.g., *VM* 2.44: returning "ad propriam urbem" (to one's city); or, more generally, phrasing that includes home and all that is "one's own": "ad propria remeavit" (*VM* 2.48).

the structure of marriage and family might be declined in favor of sustaining the transformed state in a new and different social unit. For example, another woman, after her cure, "abandoned her husband and children, adopted a habit, and…became a nun in the church" (*VM* 2.9). Thus institutionalized or "permanent liminality" can displace reintegration into the original group through the adoption of a community whose members are linked by religious affiliation rather than family ties.[81]

Regarding the question of aggregation, also worth mentioning are the accounts of release from imprisonment or slavery. That these miracles occur in the stories Gregory gives suggests that instances of social injustices, like disease, require saintly remedies. These occurrences can be dramatically represented, with the released coming to Martin's church carrying their broken chains.[82] Such accounts are portrayed as escapes from darkness to light, from mortifying bondage to restored freedom. More will be said on the theme of miraculous liberations when we turn to Gregory's *VP*. For now let us note that presenting the healing process and release from social oppression as a movement from death to life also relates to the way such miracles reinforced the belief system. At Martin's tomb, performances of life and death played out. Similar to the deformed boy thrown there in misery, sufferers are also sometimes described as having been left for dead. Their cures are thus explicitly characterized as 'rebirths.'[83] At the feet of Martin, "threshold people" underwent the experience of "tomb and womb."[84] Cures, therefore, typified bodily resurrection. Thus we come to the most striking "concordance between symbolic and social experience": the understanding of illness within the Christian perspective of sin and salvation.[85]

Obviously, the idea of moral failing leading to illness has been examined by many researchers in a number of fields. Van Dam has also emphasized this connection (both explicit and implicit) between culpability and infirmity in Gregory's etiology of illness.[86] It is worth pursuing this question of sin's link to sickness, for the role of human responsibility does not always figure

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81   Turner, *Ritual Process*, 145.

82   Such instances are discussed by Kitchen, "'Raised from the Dung': Hagiography, Liberation and the Social Subversiveness of Early Medieval Christianity," in *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianities*, (ed.) Willi Braun (Waterloo, Ont., 2005), 121–159; but see especially Graus' article, "Die Gewalt" (n. 40 above).

83   Van Dam, Saints, 91.

84   Turner, *Ritual Process*, 28, 95.

85   Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols*: *Explorations in Cosmology* (London, 1996), xxx, with Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971–1997," 362.

86   Van Dam, *Saints*, 87–89.

consistently in Gregory's stories. Put differently, the relationship between sin and bodily defects is sometimes ambiguous. Three different contexts bear on the issue. First, sin is depicted as a specified personal fault that brings on illness; second, sin is unspecified but still vaguely responsible for a physical debilitation; third, sin is downplayed as a cause of illness while faith's role in health is heightened. Each of the three shows perspectives on the healing process that merit our attention.

(*1*) *Sickness as a Result of Personal Sin.* The first and most obvious way sin relates to sickness is found in accounts depicting culpable activity, which receives punishment, often in the form of a psychologically related or "hysterical" ailment that the saint heals.[87] These sin-related illnesses often arise from working on a Sunday or on the feast day of Martin (though, obviously, this applies to other saints as well). Such instances show the affliction fitting the violation, with the hands of workers who defied the holy day often contracting. Sometimes the instrument used in the labor cannot be extracted.[88] These are physical debilitations explicitly attributed to specific behavior. Clearly, the hagiography portraying such instances aimed at curtailing activity that threatened saints' cults and posed a challenge to ecclesiastical authority. Within this class of sins bearing obvious connections to personal culpability, we may also include the instances in which ecclesiastical property is taken, whether precious objects, livestock or land. Usurpers of such property could act with a mocking insouciance; a thief stealing sheep from pastures belonging to a shrine replies to shepherds: "Do you think that [Saint] Julian eats mutton?" (*VJ* 16) Thus it is important to stress that these stories reveal the precariousness of devotion even as they underscore the physically disabling consequences awaiting those who defy saints and their churches.

Also noteworthy is the way the violation of purity regulations can lead to illness. We have already seen a stunning example. The mother of the deformed boy revealed that the child was conceived the night before a holy day. As noted in the quotation describing this incident, Gregory claims to have interviewed the boy himself. Significantly, after authenticating the testimony, Gregory concludes the story by making an explicit denunciation of husbands who do not restrain themselves:

> ...you men who are joined in marriage, watch out! Be content to indulge
> your lust on the other days, but observe this day without pollution in

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87   Aline Rousselle, *Croire et guérir: La foi en Gaule dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 1990), 246; such accounts reveal "le caractère hystérique du symptôme."

88   Wood discusses such examples: "How Popular was Early Medieval Devotion?" (as at n. 17).

> praise of God. For if [intercourse] takes place, then children are born who
> are crippled or suffer from epilepsy or leprosy. Let this be proof, so that a
> sin that is committed on one night might not be endured for the space of
> many years. (*VM* 2.24)

Here hagiography becomes a sermon. As with the punitive miracles involving
Sunday workers and those snubbing feast days, the account not only shows
Gregory's ideal of a Christian community kept in line by Saint Martin, but also
the way in which practice did not always match what was preached. These
cases, then, are clearly depicting illnesses as the result of specific misdeeds,
which Gregory names, with the malefactors not only disabled, but also, once
contrite, cured. Of course, in these examples, the alleviation of pain after
repentance has a particular importance for inculcating a core idea of the belief
system, for the deformity of sin, embodied in an offspring conceived at an
inappropriate time, can be repaired through the saint's intervention. Thus, to
iterate a crucial point, the Christian myth of sin and salvation played itself out
on the bodies of contrite transgressors.

(2) *Unspecified Sin in Relation to Infirmity.* Other stories do not name partic-
ular transgressions. This second way sin relates to sickness denotes its general
presence as something given. Similar to the case of the deformed boy, suffering
because of culpability is present; at the same time, and in contrast to that
example, no explicit mention of wrongdoing surfaces in the telling of the story,
even if the failings are vaguely designated as personal ones. Perhaps we may
consider this link between sin and sickness part of the 'human condition' to
which all are susceptible. As we might expect given the number of cures
Gregory reports, several texts illustrate the infirmed body as an expression of
acknowledged but unspecified culpability. Take, for instance, a telling example
of a blind woman who wanted to attend Easter services:

> [The woman] began to weep because she was at her estate and to say:
> "Woe is me who do not deserve to see this festival with the rest of the
> congregation, because I have been blinded by my sins." Then she wept
> loudly, knelt on the ground, and called upon the name of the blessed con-
> fessor; once she finished her prayer, she was restored to her original sight.
> (*VM* 2.28)

Typical of such reports, the passage compacts the message of Gregory's reli-
gion in a hagiographical vignette. From such terse stories, Christianity's mean-
ing may be plucked. The darkness of physical blindness signifies the darkness
of sin, just as the illumination of the eyes denotes the redemptive power held

out by the saint's intercession.[89] The restoration of vision marks the return of an innocent state, one of "original" sight.

Other examples could easily be cited showing the tendency to view illness in relation to sin as a general condition. In fact, as will be recalled, in the passage that opened our inquiry, Gregory's recounting of his dysentery includes his claim to be in just such a state. But there is also a third position to consider.

(3) *Sin Downplayed.* Despite the strong statements Gregory made in the case of the deformed boy, he does not always insist on a direct link between sin and sickness. Certain passages suggest that at times Gregory attenuated what often appears to be a strong connection between the two. In fact, we can see the trace of this more ambiguous relation in all of the instances just mentioned. Put differently, whatever role sin plays in the configuring of illness it is the display of the saintly patron's healing power, activated by the client's faithful and often ritualistic appeal, that gives the stories their tenor. In making that observation, Gregory's address to husbands again deserves to be mentioned. We immediately notice that here he accentuated culpability to a point that seems out of keeping with the other reports. The story became freighted with a moralizing admonishment, which departed from the standard, episodic narratives generally found. Deliverance by the saint and the sufferers' own initiative in the healing process come into view as the crucial point of Gregory's miracle stories, though that assertion is not meant to deny the link between human failing and illness.

To elaborate, let us note an instance in which Gregory actually refrains from making a judgment regarding the possibility of a birth defect arising from sin. The passage especially deserves our attention because it resembles the situation that led to Gregory's sermonizing in the earlier quotation about the deformed child born of intercourse on a Sunday. The difference in this text, however, emerges when Gregory leaves the question of the parent's responsibility undetermined and instead accentuates the power of Martin. The account concerns a cleric named Piolus, who

> had lived since birth despite offering hands that were too twisted for any tool and therefore useless for any labor. I do not have the ability to determine why this happened, or whether this man or his parents had sinned so that he was born crippled in this way. But I do know this one fact, that the goodwill of the bishop was revealed in him just as in other ill people. (*VM* 2.26)

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89   As thieves who steal at night discover after they cannot escape the premises, sin is a wandering in darkness with no way out: *VJ* 18, 20.

As Gregory's comment clearly shows, the question of sin in the case of Piolus' deformity is subordinate to the opportunity the illness presents to demonstrate Martin's benevolence. Indeed, the last sentence of the above quotation gives the impression that the possibility of his parents' responsibility in the birth defect hardly matters. What is important, Gregory seems to be saying, is that the same mercy is extended to him as to any other sufferer. In diminishing the role of sin here, we can see a biblical idea at work. As John's Gospel relates, when Jesus and his followers encounter a blind man, the disciples ask, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The reply: "It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (9:2).

This very passage Gregory alludes to when discussing a miracle involving a man whose "fingers had bent into his palm" (*VM* 2.40). Martin appears to the man in a dream. When the sufferer, a pauper named Sisulf, asks why he is enduring the affliction, as he does not know what wrong he committed, Martin responds with the biblical verse just quoted. However, even though innocent, Sisulf is to serve as an example of what happens to those who do sin. Sisulf carries out his instructions to denounce perjury, usury and Sunday working to everyone, "lest they die a cruel death as a result of their own crimes." But he also asserts, "I do not know what misdeed I have committed." That response and the immediately following Johannine verse disrupt the usual association between illness and wrongdoing. Sin as an explanation for suffering might not have always been easy for the innocent to accept.

To summarize, there is certainly a tendency to view sickness as a result of misconduct against the saint or the regulations of the church. This misconduct is explicitly named and the malefactor punished, but relieved after appealing to the saint. In addition, we also find sin envisaged as a general human condition expressed through illness, in such a way that, say, physical blindness corresponds to the darkness of moral transgression. At the same time, Gregory's stories of Piolus and Sisulf, along with the use of the biblical text in which sickness is presented not as a consequence of sin but as an opening for miraculous healing, remind us that despite the narratives tying ailments to sin, the power of the saint as a reliever of misfortune, whatever its causes, appears as the central point in the accounts.

As for the larger question related to the function of the shrine that we can see in the miracle stories, we may note, as others have, that Saint Martin is presented as the great alleviator of many sorts of suffering. That is obvious. Less obvious is the role of the narratives in relation to the shrine and the religion of its pilgrims. Hagiography as documentation has an expansiveness to it, with the recounted deeds of power widening the expectation of their continuation,

which is precisely what happens when a miracle occurs during the anniversary reading of Martin's *Life* or when the iconography of past miraculous deeds aligns with present ones.[90] Moreover, in providing a record of miracles so as to predispose belief in future ones, hagiography not only consolidated the cult by inducing faith in the saint's power; it also communicated the religion's central message. The miracle story, whether relating healings or liberation from social bonds, inculcated Christianity's core teaching. The process from sickness to health, or from slave to free, typified the movement from sin to salvation. Such scenes displayed the fall and redemption in capsule form. Especially in the cases showing the healing process, the transformed sick embodied the belief system's meaning. As far as its function is concerned, then, this kind of hagiography showed salvation inscribed on the limbs of the cured and the broken chains of the freed.

11.4   Typology and the *Life of the Fathers*

When introducing his first book on Martin's miracles, Gregory tells of a recurring dream in which his mother appears. Both are watching the afflicted receive health from Martin's tomb. She urges him to write down what they are seeing. At first reluctant to comply because of his poor literary abilities, he nonetheless determines to undertake the task; though once the dream ends we realize that his resolve is due as much to a particular way of reading the Bible as it is to his mother's encouragement. If God could nourish the Israelites from a "dry rock" in the desert (Exodus 17:6), Gregory reasons, then divine help can also grant a poor writer the ability to relate Martin's deeds of power. God, after all, once spoke through the mouth of an ass! Moreover, as his rhetorically accomplished hagiographical predecessor Sulpicius Severus had once observed, Christ chose humble fisherman, not eloquent philosophers, to receive and spread his message.[91] Examples from the Bible thus justify Gregory's assuming the task his mother proposed. This way of thinking with the Bible, of using it to illuminate his present situation, is typological.[92] Because typology has now emerged as one of the crucial points for understanding Gregory's outlook, especially with respect to his *Histories*, the subject requires some

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90   Cf. Brown, "Relics and Social Status," 224.

91   *Vita sancti Martini* 1–1.5 (Fontaine's edition; see above n. 15).

92   For more precise observations on typology and hagiography, see Marc Van Uytfanghe *Stylisation biblique et condition humaine dans l'hagiographie mérovingienne 600–750* (Brussels, 1987), 17–22.

consideration when addressing hagiography that bears such a strong biblical character.[93]

A recent explanation of typology describes the thinking at work in the example of Gregory drawing parallels between Scripture and his life:

> A genre of allegory, typology takes an episode or person or image from scripture and treats it as a model or "type"…that serves to interpret a different situation, understanding, or event occurring outside the frame of the original story.[94]

In the case at hand, the biblical examples Gregory cites are treated as texts addressing his reluctance to write, a situation obviously quite 'different' than the context of the passages, but the correspondence nonetheless emerges in his interpretation. Similarly, the saints Gregory portrays in biographical accounts are usually filtered through Scripture. Typology offers the rhetorical tool for such a presentation. It stamps the collection of lives we are about to consider. Almost all the stories of the *VP* bear a typological orientation, which casts the saint in a biblical mold. While Gregory's writings in general exhibit Scripture's influence, it is the *VP* that shows the biblical texts at the forefront of the narratives, with holy writ setting the theme for the hagiographical stories. The rhetorical strategy at work shows the way hagiography can function as exegesis, with the lives of saints becoming commentaries on scriptural verses that introduce the characters.

There is another dimension to this interpretative and rhetorical strategy. Typology projects a linear view of time and history: the past, present and future are related as temporal markers of an advancing divine plan, one that Scripture is thought to delineate in stages. In such a view, the earliest history of salvation, which the Old Testament narrates, foreshadows a future one fulfilled by the New Testament. In turn, Gregory's hagiography expands the temporal scope of this history by including the activities of those who bring salvation to his own time and place. He thus shows that his current era and church also continue the progress of redemption that the Bible recounts; for this progress can be traced in the lives and deeds of saints. They too follow and fulfill biblical predecessors. Typology, then, renders the present, and will render the future, purposeful and meaningful in light of the past. With the

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93   The importance of typology is seen throughout much of Heinzelmann's interpretation in *Gregory* (see especially 146–91).

94   Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New Haven, 2008), 59.

passage of time, the significance of past events opens up, as it does when the testimony of redemption in the Hebrew Bible is thought to gain its fuller expression in the scriptural texts pertaining to the Incarnation. Ultimately, the fullest revelation of this history's purpose and meaning will come at the last judgment, when Christ returns and the world reaches its end. In other words, typology articulates the temporal interconnectedness of salvation history by maintaining correspondences between past, present and future figures and events. It is a history whose developments Gregory's writings update by re-presenting Scripture in the accounts of holy men and women. Such writings show contemporary agents of God carrying on the saving of humanity in a manner reminiscent of prior biblical models.[95] Like the Bible, typological hagiography narrates the way God intervenes in earthly affairs; and saints are the means of this intervention. Their stories and miracles form a contemporary postscript to the earlier divine record, with which the holy are explicitly associated through Gregory's hagiographical adaptation of scriptural texts.

Since the typological features of the *VP* have received sustained treatment in another study, the present inquiry will focus on just two examples that can readily show both the techniques at work in Gregory's typological use of the Bible as well as the way such use relates to broader questions concerning the interconnectedness of Gregory's religious outlook and his society.[96]

The crucial role played by the introductory matter remains one of the most important features on which to focus. Franz Brunhölzl has called our attention to the importance of the prefaces and prologues in Gregory's compositions.[97] When highlighting this element throughout Gregory's literary corpus, Brunhölzl pauses on the *VP*. As he sees it, the openings for each of the *vitae* in the collection resemble sermons, which "reveal the meaning of the account

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95   See Frye, *Great Code*, 80–81.

96   On the *VP*'s typology: Kitchen, *Saints' Lives*, 75–92. On the *VP* in general: Walter Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, 1: *Von der Passio Perpetuae zu den Dialogi Gregors des Grossen* (Stuttgart, 1986), 293–96; Adele Castagno, Adele, "Il vescovo, l'abate e l'eremita: tipologia della santità nel Liber Vitae Patrum di Gregorio di Tours," In *L'agiographia latina nei secoli IV–VII* (Rome, 1984), 235–64; Robert Godding, "Il Liber Vitae Patrum di Gregori di Tours e l'origine dei Dialogi di Gregorio Magno," in *Scrivere di santi*, (ed.) Gennaro Luango (Rome, 1998), 107–28. More recently, and with regard to the *VP*'s influence: Albrecht Diem, "The Rule of an 'Iro-Egyptian' Monk in Gaul: Jonas' *Vita Ioannis* and the Construction of a Monastic Identity," *Revue Mabillon*, n.s. 19 (2008), 5–50.

97   Franz Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters, 1: Von Cassiodor bis zum Ausklang der karolingischen Erneuerung* (Munich, 1975), 137; for more recent attention to the *Histories'* prefaces as "the keys": Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 119–27.

that follows and hold the key to understanding the whole work." Thus the prologues contain the "central idea" of the collected biographies. Brunhölzl also noted the role of Scripture in coloring the perspective under which Gregory presented the saints. With these observations in mind, we are in a position to consider salient examples showing Gregory's typological techniques and their implications on his understanding of holy people.

Consider, for example, the brief story of Abraham. The name of the saint, along with the fact that he is a monk, makes the connection to the biblical patriarch Abraham an obvious choice for typological stylization. Significantly, in a move that shows how deeply strategies of biblical exegesis mark the *VP*'s stories, Gregory highlights a quality for which the biblical figure is known, faith. However, he initially turns to verses from the New Testament rather than those of the Old in which the story of Abraham is found. Thus, as is usual with typological presentations, the more recent writing explains the older one:

> I do not believe that there is a catholic who does not know that the Lord says in the Gospel: "Verily, I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, and if you say to this mountain, Be thou removed; it shall be done" (Matthew 21:12). And "all that you ask in my name, believe that you will receive it and it will come to you" (Mark 11:23). There is no reason to doubt that the saints can obtain from the Lord whatever they ask, because the faith which is in them is solid and cannot be shaken by waves of hesitation. (*VP* 3, prol.)

In the above passage, the faith of the Old Testament figure finds its representation in the evangelical precepts Gregory inserts at the beginning. As he proceeds, the correspondence characteristic of typological interpretation appears. Faith is presented as the willingness to abandon one's homeland at God's request. The patriarch and the monk thus meet as exiles:

> Such was the case in our days with the blessed abbot Abraham, who after many temptations of the world made his way to the Auvergne. And it is not without good reason that he is compared in greatness of his faith to that old man Abraham, to whom God had said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, unto a land that I will shew thee." (Genesis 12:1 *VP* 3, prol.)

Once similitude between the two emerges, Gregory introduces opposition, another feature common to Christian typological exegesis on Old Testament

passages.[98] The opposition between the two characters marks the second stage of the comparison. Thus Saint Abraham is not only a type of the biblical Abraham; he also surpasses the forerunner. Here the progression comes into play, with the Christian perspective adding a dimension to the previous biblical model. The original example is fulfilled by the saint. Immediately after quoting from Genesis, Gregory alludes to Ephesians 4:24 for the sake of showing the contrast between the previous type and the new one, what biblical scholars call the antitype: "And he [Saint Abraham] left not only his own country, but also the life of the Old Man, and he put on the New Man, formed according to God in justice, holiness and truth" (*VP* 3, prol.).

Through this "New Man," God "deigned to work miracles…worthy of admiration." In keeping with Brunhölzl's general observations, when the narrative on the actual life of the saint begins, Gregory makes a point of noting Abraham's travels. Born by the banks of the Euphrates, the saint first goes to Egypt to learn about the lives of the monks there. After captivity and beatings "by pagans," he eventually makes his way to Clermont. The unity in the narrative becomes apparent when the saint is shown following the footsteps of the scriptural model.

In examining Gregory's techniques to introduce the life of Abraham, we notice that the prologue and its following narrative relate to each other in terms of revelation and fulfillment. Put differently, the structure of Gregory's work adheres to the way he reads the Bible, with the meaning of the Old Testament clarified in the New. The new Abraham both shares in and departs from the old model. The contrast is especially telling. Regarding the tension between the two, it is worth stating that typology has been called the "mouthpiece of theology."[99] We see what such a designation means in the case of the two Abrahams. The biblical orientation in the account of Saint Abraham shows typology at the service of a Christianity that is presented, through hagiography, as superseding Judaism. Again, typology privileges, especially in the hands of Christian writers looking at the Old Testament in light of the New, the more

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98   The obvious biblical passage to cite showing the oppositional tendency is one that actually contains the word τύπος (*forma*) when comparing Adam and Christ. In Romans 5:14–18, the new Adam, Christ, undoes the sin and death that the old one brought into the world: "Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come… Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness led to acquittal and life for all men." On the *Histories*' presentation of Adam as a type, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 160.

99   Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, trans. Wulstan Hibberd (London, 1960), 44.

recent manifestation of God's acts in history, even as it maintains its connection to the past models.

Of course, the text of Abraham's life is just one example of how the typological orientation opens up a particular religious perspective. There are several viewpoints that Gregory pursues when using the various biblical texts to set the individual themes of the *VP*'s biographies. Humility, predestination, forgiveness, self-sacrifice as well as the prominence of women in salvation history all form focal points in the stories he tells. While not all of them may contain the full typological sequence that Abraham's *Vita* illustrates so effectively, most of them are grounded in prefacing biblical quotations that inform the subsequent story of the saint's life.[100] Obviously, it is not possible to go through all twenty stories. However, since it is important to consider the ways in which Gregory's hagiography conditions and reflects his society, it is worth turning to another example in which typology thoroughly informs his hagiography. The piece in mind is the *Life of Saint Portianus*, which, as an account of a runaway slave, stands out for the questions it raises regarding the complex relationship between Christianity and Gregory's stratified world.

On turning to this *Vita*, we see that typology, as a teleological view of history, has an eschatological dimension. As we saw with the *VM*, the movement from slavery to manumission is itself a type of redemptive experience, so that the escape from bondage in this life foreshadows the future experience of the one to come. Similar to Abraham's *Vita*, the insertion of biblical texts offers justification for a particular understanding of Christianity, one that the saint's story then exemplifies. Most striking in Portianus' *Life* is the way Gregory uses scriptural verses not simply to justify change in social status, but also to privilege the poor and enslaved. He marshals a range of quotations, with those of the Old Testament preceding the ones of the New, a practice (usually maintained throughout the *VP*) that illustrates once more the pattern of revelation and fulfillment we previously noted. The prologue, which deserves to be quoted in its entirety, takes up a particular thread in the history of salvation, a history that the subsequent story of the saint continues:

> How much Almighty God grants to those dedicated to His name, and how much he rewards, with the riches of His benevolence, these same ones for their faithful service! For truly He promises that He is going to give them great things in heaven. Yet often He shows in this world what they are going to receive. For he causes slaves to become free and the free to become glorious, just as the Psalmist said: "He raises the needy from

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100   See Appendix.

the dirt and lifts the poor man out of the dung, that he may place him with the princes of His people" (Psalm 113:7–8). Of this, Anna, the wife of Elkanah, said: "They that were full have hired themselves out for bread, and the servants have plenty to eat" (1 Samuel 2:5). On this, the mother of our Redeemer, the Virgin Mary herself, said: "He cast down the mighty from their seat and exalted the lowly" (Luke 1:52). In this way, the Lord Himself spoke in the Gospel: "The first will be last and the last will be first" (Matthew 20:16). Thus in his love he entices the hearts of the poor with divine mercy, so that he may establish the small as great and make the lowliest the coheirs with the Only Begotten. For out of this world's poverty he has made those who are in charge in heaven, where worldly rule has not been able to ascend, so that the peasant may go to that place where the one clad in purple did not deserve to go.[101] (*VP* 5, prol.)

As we might expect from our analysis of the previous example, Gregory presents Portianus fulfilling the scriptural passages. As his hagiographer puts it, the saint not only received freedom from "the burden of worldly servitude," but also from the world's afflictions, with the evidence of his ultimate liberation offered in the miracles he performs through his intercession. The account itself is dramatic, again suggesting the quality of a sermon in the form of a moralizing story. As Gregory describes the situation, Portianus, a slave on the run, seeks refuge in a monastery, a tactic tried on other occasions. When the abbot, who asks that the fugitive be pardoned, is met with the master's insult, the latter is blinded. The holy slave, fulfilling the prologue, cures his owner and is subsequently freed.

Perhaps such a story as this lends support to the position that typological rhetoric and thinking may assume a "revolutionary" character.[102] The matter, of course, is not easy to decide, as Gregory also presents slavery as an acceptable condition, with saints themselves having a *puer* or *puella*.[103] Moreover, Gregory's great-grandfather, Gregory of Langres, was known in life as a harsh judge. After the saint dies, the imprisoned, precisely the group who most felt the living saint's severity, appeal to him to "have pity...so that those whom you did not free while you were on this earth may obtain liberty...now that you are

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101   I have modified James' translation of the passage.

102   Frye, *Great Code*, 82–83: "[typology] is essentially a revolutionary form of thought and rhetoric."

103   Saints with slaves: *VP* 11.2, 13.2, 17.4, 20.4. Yet Nicetius does manual labor "cum reliquis famulis" (*VP* 8.1). Monegund's *puella* flees, preferring "cibum potumque" to fasting (*VP* 19.1).

dead…" (*VP* 7.3). The sick, the poor and the socially oppressed permeate Gregory's writings; they were a normal part of his world. At the same time, he also shows the possibility of their deliverance, which he clearly endorses as a manifestation of saintly power.

Whether or not his Christianity regards a class society as an unfortunate but given situation after the fall is less important than the fact that he acknowledges the possibility of, as it were, actualizing eschatology in the present.[104] The Bible indicates to him that God's plan works in his contemporary society; and so divine providence can disrupt a hierarchical social order. That is precisely what happened in the account of Portianus. The saint's better life was not simply in the future, for the biblical texts highlighting the inversion of social hierarchy, along with Gregory's own words, justify change for the poor and enslaved "in this world" (*hoc in saeculo*). Such a transformation typologically operates as an instantiation of the redemptive experience on earth; though of course this particular overturning of a master–slave relationship was justified because the slave in question desired to serve his God rather than an earthly lord. Even so, the event's presentation within the background of verses aligned with the lowly was clearly meant to show that this case of manumission offered evidence of the divine plan's progress in Gregory's time. To build on an earlier comment, we may say that the typological orientation in his hagiography offered one means by which Gregory acquired "his masterful hold on his present." This way of reading the Bible and presenting saints gave him a powerful interpretive tool for understanding his times. Scripture, typologically viewed and shaping saintly narratives, interpreted the world.

11.5   Charismatic Sanctity and Religious Authority

An earlier stage of our inquiry gave a cursory overview of the range of religious figures found in Gregory's writings, with the *VP*, in particular, offering a great multiplicity of saintly categories. This diversity has been addressed in other studies and we need not dwell on it here beyond a few observations related to the question at hand.[105]

Several of the figures are marked by a sanctity that may be described as syncretic. There are saints who combine the characteristics of the 'bloodless

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104   Cf. Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 160–72.

105   See above, n. 96.

martyr,' the monk and the cleric.[106] But within the range of saint-types, there is one kind that appears to require the intervention and regulation of episcopal authority. This is the recluse (though the conflict with this type of saint arises, in the collection under our scrutiny, only in two cases, albeit most revealing ones).

Although our concern is with the *vp*, the *Histories'* depiction of a contemporary "Stylite" in Gaul allows us to situate our approach to the question of authority in the *vp*. As Gregory relates, Vulfolaic imitated the Syrian holy men who lived on top of pillars. Of course, residing in Trier, Vulfolaic did not have the climate of his eastern models. When he told his story to Gregory, he described his frozen toenails failing off and icicles hanging from his beard. Then bishops came to see him. After indicating that he and the weather were unsuited to imitating Simeon Stylites, they said to him: "Come down off your column, and live with the brethren whom you have gathered around you." Vulfolaic complied, telling Gregory, "it is considered a sin not to obey bishops" (*Hist.* 8.15).[107] To his great sadness, however, the bishops destroyed his pillar.

According to one recent appraisal, this reprimanded Stylite posed a "danger." The threat came from the "centrality of the charismatic person… It is proximity that makes him intolerable for those lacking charisma; that is why charismatics are tolerated only when they constantly acknowledge their readiness to respect and obey the hierarchy."[108] Consider, however, another relatively recent assessment:

> When he told the story of Vulfolaic, Gregory may not have meant to suggest that bishops should seek to subdue all charismatics – rather that they should equip themselves to distinguish between true and false charisma. It was indeed Vulfolaic's bishops who had been found wanting in Gregory's eyes. The holy man had proved his authority by meekly obeying episcopal command, even though the bishops had failed to recognize his evident virtue.[109]

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106   Gregory refers to saints as martyrs, usually becoming their own persecutors ("sibi persecutors facti") through self-denial, at *vp* 2, prol.; 6, prol.; 10, prol.; 13, prol., 17.2.

107   Tr. Thorpe, 447.

108   Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word*, 131–32. Similarly, Brown, "Eastern and Western Christendom," in *Society and the Holy*, 185, says: "A society which knew all about Symeon Stylites somehow did not want one of its own: our Vulfolaic was told in no uncertain terms to get down off his column."

109   Leyser, "'Divine Power Flowed,'" 284–85. Perhaps in support of Leyser's position is Goffart's observation, *Narrators*, 220, that Vulfolaic is one of Gregory's heroes.

Let us see whether the *VP* may help us address these two, somewhat different positions regarding episcopal and 'charismatic' interaction.

The story of Senoch (*VP* 15) is most illuminating for seeing Gregory's encounter with a holy person who at first seems free of formal ecclesiastical ties. This *Vita* indicates that the solitary monk, unlike the bishops represented in the *VP*, was especially susceptible to the sin of pride. In fact, the narrative's typological orientation comes from Ecclesiastes 1:2: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity." When commenting on the verse in the *Life*'s prologue, Gregory suggests that the ascetic, precisely because this kind of holy person conquers the passions, is prone to *arrogantia*, described as a pit (*barat*[*h*]*rum*) into which the proud fall. Significantly, Gregory inserts himself into this account, for he is one of the "faithful brothers," the only one mentioned in fact, who saved the saint from ruin.

As regards its structure, the story unfolds exactly as we have seen from our earlier presentation of passages in the *VP*. After the prologue emphasizing the danger of pride, the biographical account begins. Senoch establishes religious houses and leads a rigorous life. His routines include a moderate intake of food, abstinence from wine, and going barefoot in winter. He even wears chains around his "neck, feet and hands" (*VP* 15.1). It is important to note that Gregory shows no indication that such practices should be discouraged. They are presented positively. Living in his cell, Senoch attracts visitors, who give him money, which he in turn "puts into the purses of the poor." In fact, his charity leads to redeeming slaves and freeing those in debt. He also cures the sick.

The *Vita* fulfills the biblical verse when Gregory states what happens after he meets the saint, who comes out of his dwelling for the visit. Once he has left his enclosure, Senoch returns to his family, an occasion that makes him "swollen with pride" (*VP* 15.2). Upon the saint's return, Gregory rebukes him for his boasting. Based on what Gregory states, the holy man accepted the admonishment. Significantly, however, in addition to the admonishment, Gregory also curtails the hermit's reclusiveness on the grounds that the saint's healing power should be more accessible to others. The terms on which he may completely seclude himself from time to time are in accordance with the "authority of the fathers." Like Vulfolaic, Senoch "obeyed…without hesitation."

The issue at stake here is not one of curbing rigorous ascetic practices. As already noted, the feats of deprivation are favorably reported. We may also say that even the leading of a relatively solitary life was acceptable in Gregory's view, as the saint in his cell still retained a communal function, caring for the poor and releasing debtors. It was Senoch's departure from the cell for his family in Poitou that initiated the pride and then conflict between Gregory and the recluse. In short, Gregory stepped in only after the saint fell. That observation

also bears on the two views regarding charismatics mentioned earlier. There is no indication of poor relations prior to his leaving Tours. Though conditions for Senoch's reclusiveness were put in place, the situation still remained one of accommodation, albeit an accommodation made on Gregory's terms. Unlike the episcopal intervention surrounding Vulfolaic, we find tolerance here, but it is a tolerance carefully measured out. Of course, there are lingering issues. What would have happened if Senoch had not lapsed? Or is the story meant to say that hermits will certainly lapse without a bishop's involvement? Let us consider the questions by examining another account.

The last story of the *VP* sheds more light on the temptation to leave a monastic cell and Gregory's role in handling independent holy people. The recluse Leobardus came from the Auvergne and settled near the foundation originally associated with Martin, Marmoutier. Without mentioning any details, Gregory says that a quarrel arose "between the saint and his neighbors over monastic matters" (*VP* 20.3). The dispute leads Leobardus to consider leaving. Similar to what happened in the story of Senoch, Gregory's intervention occurs when monastic stability is involved. Especially telling about Gregory's response is the way he supports the eremitical project. After "sigh[ing] deeply" and urging the hermit to stay in his cell, Gregory sends Leobardus Cassian's *Institutes* as well as the *Lives* of the desert fathers.[110]

Again, the situation suggests that relations between this recluse and his bishop were good. Indeed, both cases show Gregory wanting to keep the hermit in his already established dwelling, rather than transfer him to a monastic house. When the bishop intervened, in each case he established norms taken from patristic tradition to regulate the life of the monk. Thus the way Gregory exercised his authority over the recluses suggests the maintaining of a balance between their complete independence and his obtrusive supervision. Revealing are the practices for which Gregory singles out Leobardus. The social outlook again comes to the forefront. Care for the poor, the censure of kings, praying for the clergy and a respectable grooming of hair are all saintly characteristics of Leobardus. He also stays put for the rest of his life. What we have is an accommodation between the holy man and his bishop mediated by monastic texts:

> And when I had left him I sent him the books of the "Life of the Fathers" and the "Institution of the Monks," in order that he might learn what hermits had to do and with what care monks had to live… He expressed himself in such a gentle manner, and his exhortations were full of charm; he

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110   In the edition (MGH SRM 1.2, 742, n. 3), Krusch notes that Gregory is referring to Rufinus' *Vitae partum* and Cassian's *De institutis coenobiorum*.

had solicitude for the poor, reproof for kings and assiduous prayer for all God-fearing clerics. He was not like those who delight in wearing long hair and long beards, for at fixed times he used to cut his hair and beard. He remained twenty-two years occupied in this manner in his cell... (*VP* 20.3)

To finish this portion of our discussion, we should note that the reference to the hagiography on the fathers and to Cassianic literature is most intriguing. Several of the *vitae* in the *VP* are reminiscent of the earlier Egyptian saints, whose stories also circulated in Latin texts. Like this older hagiography, Gregory's writings show monks living harmoniously in a transformed natural world, a paradise regained. One way to think of the *VP*, then, is as a collection of lives that relate specifically to Gregory's world, so that the desert tradition is recaptured in his own era. There are modifications, of course. The reference to Cassian's work, especially if we recall Senoch's fall, allows us to consider Gregory's own function in the lives of recluses. As is well known, Cassian bequeathed to the West the harmartiology we have come to know as the 'deadly sins.' When Gregory prefaces Senoch's *Life*, he explicitly states that saints may overcome the temptations of the world, but still be struck down by pride. One reason Cassian had placed pride at the top of the chief sins is because one could defeat all the others but then become arrogant as a result.[111] Thus Gregory seems to have continued this tradition, in which *superbia* remains the root of all principal vices. Indeed, Gregory's references to pride vitiating not just saints but also other figures appear elsewhere in his writings.[112]

In addition, the reference to Cassian in Leobardus' *Life* also allows us to speculate about the changed circumstances in which Gregory would have received this monastic literature. The elders depicted in Cassian's writings assume supervisory roles as advisors to junior monks. The most hidden and intimate aspects of a monk's life become transparent under their abbatial

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111   John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum*, 12.3 (ed.) Michael Petschenig, CSEL 17, 207: "Nullum est igitur aliud uitium, quod ita omnes uirtutes exhauriat cunctaque iustitia et sanctitate hominem spoliet ac denudat ut superbiae malum..."; also relevant in light of *VP* 10, prol. (Friardus), are the chapters of the *Institutes* (10, 14, 18) emphasizing the need for monks to rely on God, not "suis tantum uiribus"; on Cassian and pride, see Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing, MI., 1967), 69; on defeating other sins and then falling to pride, the theme of the preface to Senoch's *Vita*, see the comments of Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (New York, 1998), 66.

112   E.g. *Hist.* 4.11, 10.15; *VP* 10.2.

scrutiny.[113] In the case of Leobardus, we do not know what gave rise to the dispute over "monastic matters." However, if the story of Vulfolaic is any indication, being an untethered holy man might have been the issue, especially if Leobardus rivaled his "neighbors." To recall the differing scholarly positions, it is possible that others felt threatened by his "charisma," but Gregory did not. Rigorous asceticism was acceptable so long as the recluse gave the poor and sick access to him, got his hair cut from time to time, and stayed in his cell reading accounts of earlier monks.[114] When Gregory stepped in, the recluses underwent some ecclesiastical domestication, but they were not turned into brokenhearted Vulfolaics. His interventions suggest that he was including this work as part of his episcopal office; in so doing he assumed and modified what would have been, in the circumstances Cassian describes, the duty of senior monks.[115]

11.6   Hidden Saints and their Tombs

The prologue to the *Vita* of Ursus and Leobatus traces the progress of redemption by citing biblical passages on light (*VP* 18). These saints cause the world to shine ("orbem totum…inlustraverunt") by their establishment of monastic houses. They follow the path of the "patriarchs, prophets, and apostles," whose lives, teachings, and miracles illuminate humankind (*VP* 18, prol.). As evidence of salvation's continuation in the present, the two monks are "torches" brightening the world in Gregory's own time. Thus saintly light bearers show the progress of redemption from the time of Genesis to Gregory's own ("nostris… temporibus").

The question of light concerns two other works coming under our consideration, Gregory's *Glory of the Martyrs* and *Glory of the Confessors*.[116] There are, of course, obvious differences between the two, with the former containing

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113   See Kitchen, "Cassian, Wet Dreams, and the Sexuality of Jesus," in *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals*, (ed.) Richard G. Newhauser (Leiden, 2007), 73–94.

114   Ascetic feats seem not to trouble Gregory. In the case of Lupicinus, Scripture is used to justify the saint's harsh self-affliction, including wearing a stone around his neck (*VP* 13.1).

115   Leyser, "Divine Power Flowed," 285, has a similar impression: "In the *Life of the Fathers*, he [Gregory] consolidated this image of himself as a spiritual counselor to ascetics in his diocese." Likewise, Van Dam, *Saints*, 65, n.79: "Since Gregory later reprimanded Senoch for allowing his holiness to become arrogance, perhaps he also had to assert his control over local monastic discipline."

116   In the introduction to his translation of the *GM*, Van Dam, 5, notes that Gregory "was still writing or revising at least various chapters of his book about the…martyrs into the early

accounts of eastern martyrs, including the model of all Christian martyrs, Jesus Christ, while the latter pertains primarily to saints of Gaul, particularly those associated with the region of Clermont, the area of Gregory's upbringing. Both books, in relating information about various shrines and saints, entail a greater geographical scope than the accounts devoted to the miracles of a single cult, as in the case of the hagiography on Martin and Julian.

In the GM and especially the GC, we notice a theme not encountered in the hagiography previously examined. Saints might be anywhere. They await discovery. Such inventions portray Gregory's world as a landscape buried with saintly secrets waiting to be found. These descriptions point to another purpose of the holy: The resplendent bodies of saints signify in the present the life to come. Asleep in unknown crypts they are hidden in the brush:

> Amarandus, a martyr of Albi, was buried after completing the course of a faithful struggle; but he lives in glory. As the history of his suffering states, for a long time his tomb was covered by brambles and concealed beneath thorn bushes. But at the command of the Lord it was revealed to Christians, and the crypt in which he was buried was uncovered and shone forth. (GM 56)

The earth seems full of such saints as Amarandus. As his story suggests, the mapping of saintly geography is a work in progress. The brightness of the crypt is a leitmotiv of the discoveries. Saints Maura and Britta, for instance, are covered in thickets on top of a hill that can hardly be climbed because of the dense shrubs. Their persistence in gaining the attention of the locals underscores the possibility that the holy dwell in out of the way places, where the dead burn candles for someone to see; and once the tombs are discovered, the odor of frankincense fills the air (GC 18).

The situation can come close to being an organic process, as if saints sprout. Such rising denotes resurrection. Consider three unnamed priests in a village of Aire-sur-l'Adour, who were buried closed to each other. While Gregory does not give the details of their memorials, he does indicate that the place of their tombs was known for its miracles. After many years there is a crack in the hard surface above the tombs. When the break happens, the top of one tomb becomes exposed. Once it is raised slightly, the ground below it begins to open up, slowly allowing the other bodies to rise. Each year they come closer to the

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590 s." He puts The GC's composition, *Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Confessors* (Liverpool, 1988), 5, during the "winter and spring of 587–588."

surface. It is a gradual surge of the dead out of the ground, with the scene anticipating the brightness of the risen body on the last day:

> They lay at rest in the spots where they were buried for many years. Recently the pavement that was formed from lime and crushed bricks [as hard] as the hardest stone, split and exposed the top of one tomb. Once this tomb was lifted a bit the ground was split and revealed the top of another tomb. After the appearance of this second tomb a third tomb followed; after their initial appearance the second and third tombs were slowly raised above the ground. Already now the first tomb is free from the weight of the ground and offers itself exposed to the sight of men; the other two tombs are still following [the first], but each year they emerge further [from the ground]. O miraculous mystery of the Divine! This mystery exposes to this world the purity of the bodies that were buried by producing them from [beneath] the pavement. It prepares for the resurrection those who must not be given to the worm or to dying, but who must be made equal to the bright light of the sun and who must be glorified by their resemblance to the body of the Lord. (GC 51)

Heightening the sensual experience of discovered crypts is the sight of the body immaculately preserved. Seeing the light and smelling the deceased characterize the experience of saintly *inventio*. Even the clothes of dead saints remain pristine. In their fragrant, bright crypts, and with their faces bearing a living color, the saintly bodies anticipate the promise of paradise. Again, our comments on typology offer a way of thinking about such scenes. The body has become fulfilled Scripture; its physical condition typifies and foreshadows what awaits those Christians who will be saved on the last day.

One scene in particular crystallizes the interpretive complexity of Gregory's encounters with the holy dead. It also ties together a number of points we have been making throughout this inquiry. The narrative starts with a building's structural damage leading to the breaking of a crypt. At the same time, nothing happens by chance. The damp vaulted chamber at the west end of Saint Venerandus' church in Clermont needed repair. Gregory acknowledges the operation of natural causes. But there has to be a reason for what takes place, however random an occurrence may seem.[117] The events and shifts in perspective unfold slowly. The first observations focus on material forces at work:

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117   Cf. the well-known observations on a granary's collapse by E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford, 1937), 69.

> In this chamber were many tombs sculpted from Parian marble, in which some holy men and ascetic women were buried. There is therefore no doubt that they were Christians, because the historical scenes [sculpted] on their tombs are revealed [to be] about the miracles of the Lord and his apostles. During the time when Gregorius…was count at Clermont, a section of the vaulting that was soaked with rain because of long neglect from lack of repair fell on one of the sarcophagi. (*GC* 34)

So far the account attributes the collapse to the conditions of the building. He thus offers a 'rational' explanation. Note, too, that Gregory remains confident in his belief that the burials are Christian. Of course, as we are about to see, it is not just the iconography on the tombs that leads him to that assertion. The state of a body immune to decomposition clearly plays a role in the assessment. The description is the most detailed we find of a holy corpse in his writings. When the vaulting fell,

> The lid of the sarcophagus was struck and shattered into pieces. A girl was visible, lying in the sarcophagus; all her limbs were as intact [*solidata*] as if she had been recently taken from this world. Her face, her hands, her remaining limbs were without blemish; her hair was very long; I believe she had been buried in spices. The robe that covered her lifeless limbs was as [white as] a lamb and intact, neither mutilated by any decay nor discolored by any blackness. Why say more? (*GC* 34.)

"Quid plura?" The last phrase suggests a turn in the story, as it is the conventional rhetoric for designating a miracle.[118] But the hint that saintly power is at work here does not progress into a full-blown miracle story until further empirical

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118   According to Bonnie Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (University Park, PA, 2002), 72–73: "[Gregory] concluded that her great beauty was not a miraculous sign of her holiness but the result of the successful application of spices to preserve her body." Though that observation rightly calls our attention to Gregory's acknowledgement of material causation, the claim that Gregory did not see her beauty as a miraculous sign seems to overstate the case, especially in light of the way Gregory's thought has been discussed by James (as summarized in this chapter's Introduction) and de Nie (see n. 16). In addition, as the passage quoted above indicates, the pictures on the marble burials underscore the power of faith, for the tombs discovered at Saint Venerandus' church, like the iconography in Martin's basilica, bear images of biblical miracles: "ipsae historiae sepulchrorum de virtutibus Domini et apostolorum eius expositae sunt." Moreover, the story uses the conventional phrase to suggest a miraculous occurrence, *Quid plura?* For some other examples, see: *GM* 47, *VM* 3.10, 2.53, 3.10, 3.57, *VP* 7.11.

methods are deployed. Also significant is the fact that, as he continues to describe the body, Gregory seems to raise the possibility of grave robbing having occurred. That would be an obvious indication of someone's risking divine retribution, and perhaps getting away with it. Moreover, there is a process to determining whether the body is that of a saint. When illness strikes the count's wife, she turns to doctors first. It is not clear if they failed or if their efforts do not pay off until (*donec*) divine assistance comes into play. Nor can anything be determined about the identity of the corpse. The dead person's power, however, becomes apparent. As with several other stories of deceased saints, the account hinges on the matter of suitable resting conditions. After a year without a lid on it, the sarcophagus is finally covered and the count's wife cured:

> She appeared to be so robust that she was thought to be sleeping rather than dead. Because of the shiny whiteness of her silk robe some of us thought that she had died while wearing the white robes [immediately after her baptism]. Some said that rings and gold necklaces were found on her and secretly removed, so that the bishop did not know. But no one of our present generation knew, either from gossip or from a written document, the girl's merit, origin, or name. This body lay exposed for one year… Then it happened that the wife of the aforementioned count Georgius became seriously ill… After being gripped by this illness for a long time, she lost the sight of her eyes. Once she was free from her fever, she summoned doctors, presented various requests, and offered rewards. But in no way could she receive a cure from them until finally the compassion of the Lord was motivated to look upon her. A person appeared to her in a vision during the night and said: "If you wish to be restored to your original sight, go as quickly as possible, find a clean stone, and quickly cover the sarcophagus of the girl who is at rest…." When the woman had fulfilled this command…immediately her eyes were opened. There is hence no doubt that this girl who could offer such benefits to an ill woman possessed outstanding merit. (*GC* 34)

If we take account of the description Gregory lavishes on her bodily condition, along with the fact that the corpse remained viewable for a year, we notice an aesthetic surrounding the deceased, an appreciation of the holy dead's appearance.[119] Significantly, Gregory's comments about the girl's flesh and clothing

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119   Concerning the corpse of Gregory of Langres (*VP* 7.3), Brown, "Relics and Social Status," 227, observes: "We get closer to the aesthetics of the sixth century in Gregory's miracles than in most other sources."

occur just after he has mentioned the sculpted art on the tomb. Undoubtedly, the appearance of the body is beautiful to him. But this beauty is not simply a matter of her hair and her clothing. Unlike ordinary people who die, the girl's integrity and incorruptibility denote permanence.[120] Her limbs' resistance to change renders her body beautiful. She is literally "solid" (*solidata*). Of course, the white Parian marble Gregory names is typical of his description of tombs. Yet holy corpses, like the art on their sarcophagi, have become marvelous sculpted-like figures; they occupy the plane of relief of which their crypts form the background. Their bodies are as impermeable as the marble in which they lie.[121] What has been claimed for the 12th century was also at work in the 6th: Gregory's impassible holy corpses were "miracles of stasis."[122]

In a recent consideration of Gregory's life, Ian Wood writes: "Except in very rare instances, Gregory's world is a world of inherent inconsistency and permanent flux."[123] To test that observation by putting it in the larger context of bodily states and exhumation, we find that religious corpses in both fiction and history have a way of disrupting communities, of creating more destabilization. Bruce Lincoln recalls how the corpse of Father Zossima, the famous holy man of Dostoevski's *Brothers Karamazov*, divided a monastery. The body's foul odor scandalizes supporters as Zossima's detractors take the stench as proof against his sanctity.[124] More disturbing are the exhumations occurring in Spain during July of 1936. As an expression of their scorn for, and intense hostility toward, ecclesiastical representatives, Spanish revolutionaries displayed on sidewalks and plazas the decaying corpses of priests and nuns they had dug up. The church's disfigured religious embodied their institution's "corruption"; ecclesiastics were as human as the rest of society; or so that seems to be one of

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120   Brown, "Relics and Social Status," 227, recalling *Hist.* 4.12, notes the difference between saintly bodies and ordinary ones: "The aesthetic was based on the denial that the death of the Very Special Dead had anything to do with the observed effects of the death of the average Christian…When a priest at Clermont was locked up in a tomb of Parian marble by his bishop, 'the remains of the dead man…gave out a stench which caused a tremor not only in his external organs of sense, but in his very vitals.'"

121   Other references to Parian tombs: GC 90, GC 100. In the latter case, the lid is replaced with more expensive marble, but with the original one still working cures.

122   Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995), 224. As Van Dam, *Saints*, 112, notes, "The bodies of saints…not only did not decay but actually became more healthy after they died. So in a neat reversal the worms that had infested the body of an ascetic at Nice disappeared after his death."

123   Wood, "Individuality of Gregory of Tours," 45.

124   Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (New York, 1992), p. 125.

the messages made by such shows, though in Lincoln's view politically motivated exhumations of putrefying clergy resist easy explanation.

These modern, macabre exhibitions coming at a time of tremendous crisis offer us a way of looking at Gregory's reports. They sensitize us to the social relevance of the way dead religious appear to their living viewers. In short, the bodies of Gregory's saints hardly denote "inconsistency" and "flux." If the exposure of corpses has symbolic significance for the spectators, as Lincoln claims, then the figure of the attractive, spiced body of the saint is the emblem of social stability.[125] The diffused holy corpses indicate that the potential for order dots Gregory's landscape; at night even rugged places can give off "affirming flames."[126] When spotted, the marble-like flesh of the saint, at peace, shows the hope of an eternal future condensed in a static present.

Thus the decorous holy in their crypts are the antithesis of disorder. They are evidence of stability right where the starkest process of change occurs. Gregory's cure says as much. Because Martin's tomb and the matter touching it function, like all relics, as metonyms (that is, as legitimate substitutes for the living saint), the newly appointed bishop we met at the start could encounter Martin through the contiguity of ironic dust and, as he tells us, receive his health (*sanitas*) from the tomb (*de tumulo*).[127] The stillness of Martin's crypt, or to be more precise, the healing calmness imparted by the dust in contact with it, put the commotion of Gregory's body to rest. Amidst the turmoil of his world and the flux of the body, the tomb was constant, even its dirt was order.

Van Dam rightly notes the paradox at work in the regaining of vitality through a monument to the dead.[128] Yet in this sense, too, the cult of the saints mirrors themes deep in Christianity and hagiography's history. To save one's life requires losing it (Luke 17:33). There is a 'reversed logic' at the heart of martyrdom and asceticism, and it permeates Christianity. Conceptually speaking, the tomb could not function were the paradox absent.[129] The saint's resting

125   Ibid., 117.

126   W.H. Auden, "September 1, 1939," in *The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings 1927–1939,* (ed.) Edward Mendelson (London, 1977), 245.

127   Above at n. 4. De Nie, "*Contagium* and Images of Self in Late Sixth-Century Gaul," in *Word, Image and Experience*, (III) 257, calls dust from saints' tombs "inverted 'dirt.'"

128   *Saints*, 114.

129   Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (London, 1995), 110, with Kitchen "Going to the Gate of Life: The Archaeology of the Carthage Amphitheatre and Augustine's Sermons on Saints Perpetua and Felicitas," in *Speculum Sermonis: Interdisciplinary Reflections on the Medieval Sermon*, (eds.) Georgiana Donavin, et al. (Turnhout, 2004), 36.

place, like the cross, restored life to the way it would have been were it not for sin.

Besides this theological background, Gregory's hagiography points to another firm element of his world. His writing on saints underscores a connection to a sturdy Christian past, whose continuity Gregory's hagiography maintains in his own time and place. As he tries to show, the holy men and women he writes about, along with the modes of Christian life they embody, offer his audience what is lasting: a tradition that is flourishing in the shrines, monasteries and soil of Christian Gaul, with many of its buried holy still awaiting discovery. Gregory's Christianity is what stands and continues to grow stronger with every cure that occurs at a shrine and every new saint who is found. It is a promise, he seems to be telling his readers, a promise as solid as the heavy tombs and preserved bodies of heavenly intercessors; as scripted and reliable as the rituals of healing, whose performance moves saintly patrons to aid their afflicted clients; also indicative of this promise is the prevalence of light, the light he sees coming from the mercy and goodness of saints; and this light shines in a world scholars once thought belonged to the 'dark ages.'

Furthermore, with respect to the lasting power he finds in the Judeo-Christian tradition, Gregory is completely attuned to the way the Bible speaks to his own time. Indeed, his deft hagiographical use of Scripture aligns with a history of salvation still unfolding in his day, especially in the lives of the saints. In other words, his hagiography projects stable features fixed in 6th-century society: saints and their shrines. They are the thick blocks of his culture, and their prominence compels us to resist the more or less categorical view that Gregory's life is full of "inconsistency" and "flux." When examined closely for the patterns they show, his enormous literary corpus on saints propounds a deeply moral and unwavering force at work in his times. It is presented as a force that can withstand and counter the destructive elements that Gregory himself portrays as vitiating his society. To make the point in another way, the tumultuous events he constructs in literature, especially the *Histories*, and that scholars point to for evidence of a disorderly and violent era are actually at the service of a 'divine comedy,' not a tragedy. For the message of the hagiography is clear and constant: Christianity triumphs over anomie; the saints and their cults have the power to keep society stable and unified. It is a vision of religion and society as being firmly and thoroughly interconnected in the cause of resisting disorder and demoralization. It is also a vision always worth keeping in mind when we encounter scholarship that highlights the violence of Frankish warlords and the perils and uncertainty of Gregory's era. His hagiography presents a shinning Christian milieu, one marked by the permanence, continuity and justice that hark back to biblical models, the apostles, the

martyrs and, especially, Saint Martin, who is the link between ancient Christianity and Gregory's own time and place.

Surely the prominence he gives to this tradition deserves to be kept foremost in mind, since investigating the function of Gregory's religion as it appears in his hagiography is undoubtedly a fruitful way to engage positions that view his age as one of ubiquitous turmoil and chaos. Although we have certainly seen in this discussion signs of doubt and religious tension in Gregory's time, nevertheless, the preponderance of the evidence, especially the many miracle stories, shows saints as protectors and restorers of order. Since that is the case, Gregory's hagiography may serve as a valuable source for reconsidering the question of distortion and accuracy in scholarly perceptions of Merovingian history.

With respect to that question, Goffart's insight quoted earlier is again crucial here. "The masterful hold" Gregory had is a religious one, and the hagiography portrays his grip in multiple ways. To summarize and emphasize the main points in the context of the debate over flux and stability in Gregory's life and times, we may say that the hagiography represents a world characterized by: the processural rituals and faith that trigger help for the distressed, especially the restoration of their bodily health; the inculcation of theological ideas, particularly the teaching of redemption, through stories of cures; the regularity of the liturgical commemoration of saints; the justice and mercy marking punitive miracles and upward changes in social status through release from captivity or bondage; the institutional continuity of a biblical tradition going back to the Old Testament and early church; many sure guides in, and models of, the Christian life; episcopal intervention that resolves ecclesiastical tensions and aligns the behavior of other religious representatives, specifically hermits, with patristic exemplars; and perhaps most important of all, the possibility of the flesh's integrity even in death, an integrity typifying on earth and in Gregory's present the resurrection and paradise that salvation, mediated by the church, offers.

This last point deserves the greatest emphasis. With the exception of the almost inconsolable mourning Gregory describes at Saint Radegund's funeral (*GC 104*), there is nothing shown to be more stabilizing, reassuring and promising than the well-preserved, dead saint resting in a marble tomb full of pleasant odors and intense light. In his portrayal of them, the deceased holy are monuments of beauty, peacefulness, vitality and faith; and they lie within the reach of those who need to touch them. As signs of heaven's attainment that are visible and tactile in this world, these special dead men and women described in hagiography express the concreteness and immediacy of everlasting life. They signify that the fulfillment of Christianity's greatest promise, immortality in the

form of somatic continuity, was already happening in Gregory's Gaul, where that promise's fulfillment had been anticipated. Put differently, the most striking feature of entombed saints is the complex way Gregory's representation of them manipulates time. His accounts basically accomplish what the literary device know as prolepsis is meant to achieve. Specifically, the image of an incorruptible body resting in a sarcophagus is a picture of a future event, in this case the resurrection, as if it has already occurred.[130] Even though the last judgment has not yet come, the impeccable condition of dead saints is, in Gregory's characterization of such scenes, a display of what risen flesh looks like; and it can be a display of considerable detail, right down to the color of clothes and length of hair. To state the obvious, saintly time, or what we might also call eschatological time, is yet another feature of the holy on which Gregory fixes to get his "masterful hold."

11.7   Conclusion

When we take into account this range of functions represented in the hagiography, we find that this literature on the period's religious life reveals the use and value of the cult of the saints, and hence Christianity, in Gregory's society. To be more precise, in the hagiographical record saints emerge as effective, traditional and extensive tools of stabilization that permeate and organize Gregory's world. It is in the hagiography that we see depicted the ways in which this religion *worked* in both senses of the word; that is, how the belief system *operated* and how it more often than not *succeeded* in addressing the needs of Gregory's community.

Finally, throughout this discussion, we have been viewing the world of saints and their miracles largely along functionalist lines. Gregory himself points us in that direction. When the ghost of Martin appears to an injured cleric, he asks the priest if a cure is wanted (*GC* 11). According to Gregory, the priest responded: "What more do men wish to have than that they might live healthy in body?" It is the kind of answer on which the anthropologist of religion fixes, as it starkly

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130   I have in mind the primary definition that C. Hugh Holman gives for this literary device in, *A Handbook to Literature,* fourth edition (Indianapolis, 1980), 353: "Prolepsis: An anticipating; the type of anachronism in which an event is pictured as taking place before it could have done so; the treating of a future event as if it is past." I am most grateful to Daniel Frederick Erin for sharing with me his knowledge of the role of tropes in intellectual history; for his work on the subject see "The Historian's Magic: The Performance of a 'Primitive' Epistemology," MA thesis, University of Alberta, 2011.

reveals the role of the saint in the physical wellbeing of those who turn to the holy. Of course, there are examples harder to fit within a functionalist approach; Van Dam stresses that often healings are "secondary motivations" rather than primary reasons for pilgrimages to shrines.[131] Even so, cures make up the bulk of the miracle stories.

But his point needs to be taken. It is necessary to keep both aspects of the saint in mind. It is not just a matter of function, of addressing physical needs. To be sure, saints were a balm for the body's wounds; yet in the internal realm of the emotions, which Gregory also depicts, saints were a source of relief for those anxious about their personal salvation. For the intense feelings of grief and guilt could be quelled by the saint's intercession, which brought solace, joy, and most important of all, hope to contrite hearts:

> For before his blessed tomb passion is to be humbled and prayer is to be raised. If tears flow and genuine remorse follows, if sighs rise up from the bottom of the heart and guilty breasts are beaten, then weeping will find happiness, guilt will find pardon, and the grief in our breasts will end with a remedy. (*VM* 3, prol.)

Whether as intermediaries acting from their tombs, as examples for leading the Christian life, or as bodies impervious to decay, the saints of Gregory's hagiography conveyed to his audiences what was possible, a sense of what the saved world could be.

Like the images on the walls of Martin's shrine, then, this literature held out the church's promise of a better life, but the promise hinged on faith.[132] The above "remedy" (*medella*), after all, is the last word reached in a long conditional sentence. As we know from the evidence of doubt, not everybody accepted the terms; nor did everyone care about saints, their tombs and their preachers, especially when couples were amorous or livestock scattered through fences; and perhaps sometimes saints were thought, as happened in another era, to sleep too soundly to hear earthly cries.[133] But when they responded, and the record suggests that happened regularly, the saints and

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131   *Saints*, 126.

132   Goffart, *Narrators*, 119 n. 33 (citing *VP* 17 prol.), states: "Gregory seems to say that the minimum condition of faith is that we should, like Thomas, at least believe the evidence of our eyes."

133   Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, 2009), 276, recalls William of Malmesbury's description of a violent time "when Christ and his saints slept."

miracles of Gregory's world were as real as the troubles they alleviated and as precious as the hope they instilled.

Appendix	Biblical Correspondences between Prologues and *Vitae* in Gregory's *Life of the Fathers*

Saint	Prefacing Biblical Theme*	Correspondence in Vita
Romanus and Lupicinus	Parable of talents: Matt. 25:27 (alluded): Matt. 25:18 (alluded); Matt. 25: 21	Lupicnus finds hidden treasure to sustain monastery (1.3)
Abraham	Patriarch Abraham leaves homeland: Genesis 12:1	Saint Abraham, "born on the banks of the Euphrates," goes to Egypt to visit hermits before coming to the Auvergne (3.1)
Quintianus	Subordination of flesh to spirit (with emphasis on saint's nobility of spirit): Gal: 5:19	Saint needs assistance in walking (4.3); he carries a small bowl because he drools (4.5)
Portianus	Change is social status: Ps. 112: 7–8; 1 Sam. 2:5; Lk. 1:52; Matt. 20:16	Saint is a runaway slave, who earns freedom after curing his master's "blindness" (5.1)
Gregory of Langres	Sanctity achieved through humility; all glory is God's: 1 Cor. 1:31	So as not to be seen, saint practices secret asceticism and devotions (6. 2)
Nicetius of Lyons	Predestination: Jer. 1:15; Matt. 1:25; Rom. 8:29	Saint's mother tells husband not to seek episcopacy, saying: "I bear in my womb a bishop" (8.1)
Friardus	God's assistance needed for gaining heaven and sanctity: Ps. 83:6; Ps. 126:1; Ps. 123:8	Before performing miracle, saint quotes the previously cited Ps. 123:8 (10.1)
Aemilianus and Brachio	Discipline, love of God and attaining paradise: Ps. 2:12; Is. 53:5 (Gregory's interpretative expansion of biblical texts highlights beauty, however fleeting, of nature)	Aemilianus lives in a paradise-regained setting; calms hunting dogs and wild boar (12.2); Brachio restores lax monastery and is described as severe to those who break rule; burial in a "very pleasant" place (12.3)

Saint	Prefacing Biblical Theme*	Correspondence in Vita
Lupicinus	The suffering of "Christ's athletes": Wis. 3.5; 2 Tim 2:4–5	Saint undergoes self-mortification, wearing heavy stone around his neck (13.1)
Martius	Forgiveness: 5:44–45; Matt. 6:14; Matt 6:9, 12	Saint forgives thief, lets him keep stolen food; saint "armed with kindness" whenever harmed (14.2)
Senoch	Danger of pride: Eccles. 1:2	Saint becomes "swollen with pride" (15.2)
Ursus and Leobatius	Light, stars and diffusion of light: Genesis 1:16–17; Jn 1:9; Matt. 5:14; Matt. 5:16; Eph. 5:27 (Gregory, allegorizing biblical texts, regards saints and monasteries as lights)	Ursus founds two monasteries and builds oratory (18.1)
Monegund	Salvation history, with the role of biblical women noted: Matt. 1:18, 23 (alluded); 1 Kings 10: (saint compared to Queen of Sheba who leaves her home)	Saint leaves her city of Chartres for basilica of Martin (19.2)

* *Vitae* with no prefacing biblical quotation or allusion are rare: *VP* 11, 20. Note, however, that the former (*VP* 11, Calupa's *Life*) still follows the same structure of foreshadowing prologue and fulfillment in story. In the case of Illidius (*VP* 2), the correspondence between Scripture and proceeding narrative occurs later. The remaining accounts (*VP* 6, 9, 16, 17) have prefacing biblical matter but its relation to the saint's story does not appear to me to correspond to the pattern of those accounts represented in the table. Finally, perhaps on occasion (e.g., Quintianus' *Life*) not all readers will concur with my identification of the correspondence.

PART 5

Gregory and the Political World of the Sixth Century

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Gallic Politics in the Sixth Century

Stefan Esders

12.1   Introduction: Before the Sons of Chlothar I (†561)

A great many things keep happening, some of them good, some of them bad. The inhabitants of different countries keep quarrelling fiercely with each other and kings go on losing their temper in the most furious wars. Our churches are attacked by the heretics and then protected by the Catholics; the faith of Christ burns bright in many men, but it remains lukewarm in others; no sooner are the church-buildings endowed by the faithful than they are stripped bare again by those who have no faith.[1]

The famous general preface to Gregory's *Histories* may indicate at the beginning of this chapter how the bishop of Tours thought about the nature and object of politics in his time. If Gallic politics in the 6th century were a reason to write history, it could for Gregory be none other than a history of wars of different kinds.[2] Turning politics into narrative history – his task as a historian – thus appears as reporting conflict, war, and action and explaining

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1 *Hist.*, preface; trans. Thorpe, 63.
2 Thomas Scharff, *Die Kämpfe der Herrscher und der Heiligen: Krieg und historische Erinnerung in der Karolingerzeit*, Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne 4 (Darmstadt, 2002), 1–2.

how and why God intervened on earth by either rewarding or punishing those who acted on his behalf or contrary to the rules of the *ecclesia*.[3]

Though the Franks figure prominently in Gregory's histories, the *liber histo-riarum* is not a history of the Franks, but rather a history of Gaul in the first century under Merovingian rule.[4] Within Gaul, not surprisingly, Gregory regarded Tours as the most important bishopric. His histories begin with the creation of the world and end with a list of the bishops of Tours and their deeds. Thus world history leads to Tours and enhances Gregory's vision of the role played by Tours in his own time. In Book 1, when writing on the coming of Christianity to Gaul, Gregory mentions Lyons as a foundation of the age of Augustus (*Hist.* 1.18). But having outlined the spread of Christianity in a roughly chronological order starting from the apostles and including the martyrs of Lyons (*Hist.* 1.29), Gregory places much more emphasis on the seven who were appointed bishops for the Gallic *civitates* of Tours, Arles, Narbonne, Toulouse, Paris, Clermont and Limoges in the reign of the emperor Decius and who either suffered martyrdom or came to be regarded as confessors (*Hist.* 1.30). It was important that Catianus of Tours was among them, but it is was even more important for Gregory to emphasize Saint Martin of Tours, born in the age of the emperor Constantine, whose mother Helena detected the true cross (*Hist.* 1.36). Gregory mentions Martin's preaching (*Hist.* 1.39) and ends Book 1 with Martin's death and the conflict between Tours and Poitiers over his remains (*Hist.* 1.48).

The bishops of Tours thus had already been installed as apostolic successors for the Gallic churches in Book 1, before the Frankish king Clovis emerged as Catholic champion and executor of the divine will against heretical kings and

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3   On historiographical and theological foundations of this interpretation, see Reinhart Herzog, "Orosius oder Die Formulierung eines Fortschrittskonzepts aus der Erfahrung des Niedergangs," in *Niedergang: Studien zu einem geschichtlichen Thema*, (eds.) Reinhart Koselleck and Paul Widmer (Stuttgart, 1980), 79–102.

4   Walter Goffart, "Gregory of Tours and the 'Triumph of Superstition,'" in idem, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), 112–234, at 119–127; Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* (Cambridge, 2001), 192–201; Helmut Reimitz, "Social networks and identities in Frankish historiography: New aspects of the textual history of Gregory of Tours' Historiae," in *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages – Texts, Resources and Artifacts*, (eds.) Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger and Helmut Reimitz, The Transformation of the Roman World 12, (Leiden, 2002), 229–268; idem, "The Providential Past: Visions of Frankish Identity in the Early Medieval History of Gregory of Tours' Historiae (Sixth – Ninth Century)," in *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1000*, (eds.) Clemens Gantner, Richard Payne and Walter Pohl (Farnham, 2012), 109–136.

peoples in Book 2.[5] To make the point that Clovis' victory over Alaric was a victory of Catholicism over Arianism, Gregory may have had to rearrange his material chronologically to some extent, so that also his portrayal of Clovis' baptism should be interpreted within this context.[6] In addition, Clovis' imperial-style celebration at Tours in 508 is placed by Gregory in the vicinity of his decisive victory against the Arian Visigoths in Vouillé in 506, creating the impression that the territories of the Roman provinces Lugdunensis III and Aquitania I and II had now lawfully become part of the Frankish kingdom with imperial consent.[7]

If we look at the *Histories* more closely, however, it becomes evident that it cannot have been Gregory's primary purpose to present the Merovingians as lawful successors to Roman imperial rule in Gaul. It is difficult to gauge how much imperial legitimacy mattered to Gregory's view on Gallic politics in the 6th century. Large parts of his narrative can, and indeed must, be read as focussing on the legitimacy of the Merovingians rather than their role as lawful successors to Roman imperial rule.[8] Their legitimacy for Gregory did not primarily depend on some supposed 'Romanness' of their rule. This attitude is reflected in the negative picture he paints of later kings such as Chilperic (*Hist.* 6.46), who were obviously strongly influenced by Roman ideas of rulership and government, and even Roman emperors like Justin II (*Hist.* 4.40). Rather, Gregory seems to have interpreted the Merovingians' success and conversion in a providential sense. His view on Gallic politics focuses much more on the role he attributes to Merovingian kings as Christian rulers over Gaul and on their relationship to Tours, its Christian capital in Gregory's understanding, and on their cooperation with the Gallic bishops.

Gregory's integration of these perspectives into his narrative is most prominent in his narrative of the history and politics of his own time, beginning with Book 4. This begins by recording the death in the mid 540 s of the aged queen

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5 Martin Heinzelmann, "Heresy in Book I and II of Gregory of Tours' Historiae," in *After Rome's Fall. Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, (ed.) Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto, 1998), 67–82.

6 *Hist.* 2.33. Ian N. Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 63 (1985), 249–272; Danuta Shanzer, "Dating the baptism of Clovis: The bishop of Vienne vs the bishop of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), 29–57.

7 *Hist.* 2.38. See Michael McCormick, "Clovis at Tours, Byzantine Public Ritual and the Origins of Medieval Ruler Symbolism," in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, (eds.) Evangelos K. Chrysos and Andreas Schwarcz (Vienna, 1989), 155–180; see also Helmut Castritius, "Chlodwig und der Tag von Tours im Jahre 508," in *Völker, Reiche und Namen im frühen Mittelalter*, MittelalterStudien 22, (eds.) Matthias Becher and Stefanie Dick (Munich, 2010), 113–120.

8 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 60–175 and 172–191.

Chrodechildis (Chlothild) in Tours and her burial in Paris in the church of St. Peter, next to her husband Clovis (*Hist.* 4.1), and then reports the attempt of King Chlothar I (511–561), presumably shortly thereafter, to raise the level of taxation on the churches. The bishops, according to Gregory, grudgingly signed off on the increase, except Injuriosus, bishop of Tours, who refused; out of respect for Saint Martin, Chlothar then made an exception for the church of Tours alone (*Hist.* 4.2). Following this, Gregory mentions Chlothar's offspring from his wives Ingundis, Arnegundis and Chunsina, emphasizing that Arnegundis was Ingund's sister and thereby indicating that Chlothar by marrying her had committed polygyny and incest at the same time – from a bishop's point view two abominable crimes, with the potential to rouse God's anger and imperil society ostensibly ordered according to his precepts. In this description, Gregory already implies that Chilperic, being the only son of Chlothar's marriage with Arnegundis, was different from his half-brothers. And Gregory noted that by now three of Chlothar's sons had died during their father's lifetime (*Hist.* 4.3). Thus at the very beginning of Book 4, Gregory combines a Tours perspective with details that offer some kind of explanation for the calamities he would later describe. In the following chapters he deals with the misdeeds and early death of Chlothar's son Chramn, which are closely connected with quarrels over the appointment of bishops in Clermont and Tours (sees intimately tied to his family), ending with Chlothar's death and the division of the Frankish kingdom among his remaining four sons in 561.[9] So, in the first half of Book 4, already the setting is prepared for the civil wars Gregory describes in later books, though in a highly allusive and sometimes even satirical style.[10]

   In the following pages, a brief description of Gallic politics in the second half of the 6th century will be given, largely based on Gregory's narrative, the main source for any attempt to reconstruct these events. Inherent in this approach however, is a fundamental methodological problem of separating such a narrative from the assumptions and biases which Gregory had when writing about events. For this reason I have tried to balance the narrative in the first section with some general and more structural perspectives in the second where additional source material and results of modern scholarship will also be integrated. In doing so, I hope to mitigate the methodological problem a little, while being fully aware of the fact that it cannot actually be solved in a strict sense.

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9   Chramn: *Hist.* 4.13, 16–18, 20. Quarrels over appointments at Clermont and Tours: *Hist.* 4.5–7, 11–12, 15; on Gregory's family, see Heinzelmann, above, Ch. 1. Chlothar's death: *Hist.* 4.21–22.

10   Goffart, *Narrators*, 197–203.

12.2 Partitions, Shifting Loyalties and Civil War: An Outline of Gregory's Contemporary History, a. 561–592

12.2.1 *From Partition to Fragmentation, a. 561–568*

The division of the Frankish kingdom following the death of king Chlothar I in 561 and the partition of Charibert's kingdom a few years later in late 567 or early 568 lie at the heart of the Frankish *bella civilia*, which appear to have been one of Gregory's chief *causae scribendi*. In 561, Chlothar's sons Charibert, Sigibert, Guntram and Chilperic made a legitimate partition, *divisio legitima* (*Hist.* 4.22), whereby Charibert was to receive large parts of Western Gaul with Paris as capital, while Guntram's kingdom comprised large parts of southeastern Gaul, notably Burgundy, and Sigibert gained the eastern parts of the Frankish kingdom, a region called Austrasia by Gregory's time. As for Chlothar's only son by his wife Arnegundis, Chilperic, who Gregory tells us had immediately moved to occupy Paris and was forced to relinquish it by his elder half-brothers Charibert, Sigibert and Guntram (sons from Chlothar's first marriage with Arnegundis' sister Ingundis), he was put at a disadvantage in the division in that he obtained only a small portion in Northern France with Soissons as capital.[11] In addition to providing for Chlothar's sons, the outline of the partition of 561 has to be explained by an effort to ensure that the four kingdoms should all participate in Francia, the heartland of Frankish settlement and expansion, which included large parts of Northern Gaul and the Paris basin. For this reason, the cities chosen as capitals by the four kings, that is Soissons (Chilperic), Orléans (Guntram), Paris (Charibert) and Rheims (Sigibert), were comparatively close to each other.[12] As result of expanding Frankish interest in the southern parts of Gaul, however, this political landscape did not remain fixed. For only ten years later we find king Guntram taking residence in Chalons-sur-Sâone (northern Burgundy) and Sigibert moving his capital to Metz, while the status of Paris became a bone of contention among the surviving brothers after Charibert's death. This drift of the political centers also leads us to assume that cities in Southern and South-Western Gaul and cooperation with local aristocratic groups became more and more important for exercising political rule.[13]

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11 Eugen Ewig, "Die fränkischen Teilungen und Teilreiche (511–613) (1953)," rept in idem, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien: Gesammelte Schriften (1952–1973)*, Beihefte der Francia 3 (Munich, 1979), 1: 114–171, at 135–138.

12 Eugen Ewig, "Résidence et capitale pendant le haut moyen âge" (1963), in idem, *Gesammelte Schriften* 1, 362–408.

13 Jörg Drauschke, "The Search for Central Places in the Merovingian Kingdom," in *Trade and Communication Networks of the First Millennium AD in the Northern Part of*

By the agreement of 561, Tours became subjected to king Charibert, who held large portions in Aquitaine and Neustria and took his residence in Paris.[14] Not much is known about Charibert's short six-year reign, but some aspects of its character emerge from the sources.

In his panegyric on Charibert delivered in 567 (*Car.* 6.2) at Paris, the Italian poet Venantius Fortunatus stresses Charibert as successor to Childebert I, who had been king of Paris from 511 to 558, and whom Charibert appears to have followed by making Paris his capital. Charibert probably represented his rule as a break with the three years' rule of Chlothar I and a restoration in some way of the times of Childebert. Charibert also welcomed Chlothar's supposedly unrecognized son called Gundovald, who had to flee Gaul after Charibert's death and eventually returned as a usurper.[15] In the same poem Venantius also compares Charibert to Old Testament kings David and Solomon and to the *princeps optimus*, the Roman emperor Trajan, suggesting that at least espousing high ideals of kingship mattered at Charibert's court. The orbit of Charibert's political influence may also be illustrated by the fact that his daughter Bertha married king Aethelbert of Kent.[16]

Charibert was also apparently very much engaged in church policy. A council that took place at Tours in November 567, only shortly before Charibert's death, represented the whole of Charibert's kingdom, that is the ecclesiastical provinces of Tours, Rouen and Sens, and was presided over by archbishop Eufronius of Tours.[17] Its lengthy decisions, written in a highly literate, indeed learned, style with many quotations from biblical and other legal sources, deal not only

Central Europe: Central Places, Beach Markets, Landing Places and Traditing Centres, (eds.) Babette Ludowici, Hauke Jöns et al., Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung 1 (Hanover, 2010), 26–48.

14   In *Hist.* 9.30, Gregory emphasized that the people of Tours had promised fidelity to Charibert (in 561) and the king in turn promised not to introduce new taxes and customs.

15   *Hist.* 6.24, 7.10 etc. Bernard S. Bachrach, *The Anatomy of a Little War. A Diplomatic and Military History of the Gundovald Affair (568–586)* (Boulder, 1994), 6–11.

16   *Hist.* 9.26. The date for this is not certain, but given the fact that his daughter Chlothild became detained to a monastery after Charibert's death (see below), it seems likely that this happened during his lifetime.

17   On the council and its decisions, see Odette Pontal, *Die Synoden im Merowingerreich* (Paderborn, 1986), 128–135, whose account, however, should be supplemented by the studies by Paul Mikat, *Die Inzestgesetzgebung der merowingisch-fränkischen Konzilien (511–626/627)* (Paderborn, 1994), 41–50, and Karl Ubl, *Inzestverbot und Gesetzgebung: Die Konstruktion eines Verbrechens (300–1100)*, Millennium-Studien 20 (Berlin, 2008), 156–167. On Charibert's policy of episcopal appointments, see Gregory Halfond, "Charibert I and the Episcopal Leadership of the Kingdom of Paris (561–567)," *Viator* 43, no. 2 (2012), 1–28

with topics such as provincial councils, deposition of clerics, ecclesiastical discipline, incest and liturgy,[18] but also rules on the protection of church property, inspired it seems by territorial controversies after the division of 561, and one on monks' fasting as a reaction to an imminent crisis which is alluded to as a *clades*.[19] Another result of this council is probably a letter, quoted literally by Gregory (*Hist.* 9.39), from the bishops of Tours, Rouen, Paris, Nantes, Angers, Rennes and Le Mans to Radegund, former wife of Chlothar I, regarding her monastic foundation at Poitiers. While claiming some kind of apostolic tradition for the church of Tours as founded by Saint Martin, the bishops confirm the validity of the rule of Caesarius of Arles for Radegund's monastery and stress that nuns, who had voluntarily entered the community, should never have the right to leave it. If the dating of this letter is correct, there may be some irony in Gregory quoting it in the context of the revolt of the nuns in 589 following death of Radegund. For it was Charibert, who had presided over the council of Tours in 567 and his daughter Chlothild (Chrodieldis), detained in Radegund's monastery after Charibert's death, who instigated the famous revolt two decades later.[20]

When the provincial synod deposed and replaced the bishop of Saintes, who had been appointed by Chlothar I, Gregory tells us that the validity of the deposition was rejected by Eufronius of Tours and that Chlothar's original appointment was upheld by his son Charibert (*Hist.* 4.26). Though this story on first sight looks favourable to Charibert, it is framed in a lengthy chapter focussing on Charibert's indiscriminate selection of wives, standing in contrast with Sigibert's dignified selection of the Visigothic princess, Brunhild, recounted in the next chapter. Charibert was possibly married to two sisters at the same time, for it is not clear whether he married Marcoveifa, a former nun, while he was still married to her sister Merofled. The incest involved in the union caused the bishop Germanus of Paris to excommunicate the couple. Charibert's refusal to dissolve this marriage was taken by Gregory as the reason for his wife's death and his own, which followed soon after, leaving behind at least one other wife called Theudogildis (*Hist.* 4.26).

Charibert's death must have happened rather suddenly and unexpectedly, for Gregory reports on his predecessor Eufronius' miraculous power to sense at great distance the king's death just as it happened (*GC* 19).[21] Gregory seems to

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18   *Concilia aevi Merovingici*, MGH LL 3, Concilia 1, (ed.) Friedrich Maassen (Hanover, 1883), 121–138.

19   On this see below n. 95.

20   See below n. 96–97.

21   See also *Hist.* 5.14.

view it as entirely deserved and not just because of the king's marital offenses. For elsewhere he links Charibert's death to the king's hatred of clerics, neglect of churches, contempt for bishops and seizure of property in the possession of Saint Martin of Tours – again there is a contrast favourable to King Sigibert, who, when he became king over Tours, restored the property to Saint Martin's control on the petition of Bishop Eufronius.[22]

12.2.2   *Austrasian and Neustrian Rivalry, a. 568–575*

Charibert's death in late 567 or even early 568 was an enormous rupture in the history of Gaul, since his brothers Sigibert and Guntram did everything to prevent a dynastic continuation of his offspring, let alone a continuation of a separate kingdom centered around Paris as royal residence.[23] Charibert did not leave any male heirs at the time of his death, and his brothers hastily detained his wife Theudogildis and daughters Bertefledis and Chlothild in monasteries in Arles, Tours and Poitiers respectively, obviously in order to prevent them from entering marriages that might complicate their uncles' control of their father's kingdom;[24] in the long term Chlothild's discontent with her lot would lead to the famous nun revolt in the monastery of Poitiers, which Gregory described in his history (*Hist.* 9.39; 10.15–17). The immediate problem for the three remaining brothers was to agree to divide Charibert's kingdom and an agreement to that effect took place in 568 soon after the king's death. Again, Chilperic was kept away from Paris, which, it was agreed, would be neutral and accessible to none of the brothers without the consent of the others. At the same time Sigibert entered an alliance with the emperor Justin II, who had succeeded Justinian to the throne in Constantinople in 565 and who sought Austrasian support against the Lombards who invaded Italy in 568. As the treaty's main protector, a Byzantine saint, Polyeuctus, was invoked, whose relics had been transferred from Constantinople to Metz, the Austrasian capital, just before or perhaps along with the relics of the True Cross which were sent

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22   *VM* 1.29. Gregory also does not fail to note Charibert's dissipation (*luxuria*).

23   On the date of Charibert's death occurring at least late in the year and the subsequent division occurring in 568, see Stefan Esders, "'Avenger of all perjury' in Constantinople, Ravenna and Metz. St Polyeuctus, Sigibert I. and the Division of Charibert's Kingdom in 568," in *Western Perspectives on the Mediterranean. Cultural Transfer in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (400–800)*, (eds.) Andreas Fischer and Ian N. Wood (Oxford, 2014), 17–40.

24   *Hist.* 4.26. See Martina Hartmann, "Reginae sumus. Merowingische Königstöchter und die Frauenklöster im 6. Jahrhundert," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 113 (2005), 1–19.

to Radegund's monastery in Poitiers.[25] Indeed the years around 570 appear to be a time of considerable Byzantine political and cultural influence in Austrasia and emphasize the leading role of Austrasia in the Gallic polity of the time.[26]

By the partition of Charibert's kingdom, Tours now became part of king Sigibert's kingdom, like the Auvergne, Gregory's homeland, which had long been subject to Austrasian rule. As a consequence Gregory, who was appointed bishop of Tours by Sigibert in 573, regarded the Austrasian kings Sigibert (561–575) and Sigibert's son Childebert II (575–595) as the legitimate rulers over Tours, even as Chilperic repeatedly attempted to gain control of Charibert's cities by subduing Tours, Poitiers and Paris, and later after Chilperic's death, as Guntram tried the same thing. The importance of this Austrasian connection is evident in Gregory's histories in his dating of events and many other details.[27]

Gregory emphasizes Sigibert's marriage with the Visigothic noblewoman Brunhild, which was celebrated at Metz probably in 566, as a deliberate departure from his brothers' habit of entering ignominious marriages with low-born women (*Hist.* 4.27). The marriage, celebrated in great style at the new Austrasian capital at Metz, and featuring an epithalamium composed by the poet Venantius Fortunatus (*Carm.* 6.1), who had just arrived from Italy, was part of an alliance between Visigoths and Austrasians;[28] it was followed up the following year with Chilperic's marriage to Galswinth, Brunhild's sister.

This double Frankish-Visigothic link may in retrospect stand at the beginning of the antagonistic Neustro-Austrasian family drama that only came to an end in the dreadful execution of Brunhild in 613. The later chronicle of Fredegar mentions an alliance, between Sigibert and Chilperic against Guntram of Burgundy which eventually ended in an agreement between the three kings at Troyes.[29] It seems reasonable to link the alliance with the marriages as part of a common plan of Sigibert and Chilperic against Guntram. But this alliance, possibly concluded in 568 or somewhat later, quickly came to an end as a result

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25 Isabel Moreira, "Provisatrix optima: St. Radegund of Poitiers' Relic Petitions to the East," *Journal of Medieval History* 19 (1993), 285–305. On Radegund's connection to Constantinople through her cousin Amalafrid, who was *magister militum* at that time, see Wolfram Brandes, "Thüringer / Thüringerinnen in byzantinischen Quellen," in *Die Frühzeit der Thüringer: Archäologie, Sprache, Geschichte*, (eds.) Helmut Castritius, Dieter Geuenich, and Matthias Werner, Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, Ergänzungsband 63 (Berlin/New York, 2009), 291–327, at 302–305

26 Esders, "St Polyeuctus," as in n. 23, discusses the range of evidence.

27 Alexander Callander Murray, "Chronology and the Composition of the Histories of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), 157–196, at 165, 175, 193–195.

28 On the marriage see Bruno Dumézil, *Brunehaut* (Paris, 2008), 113–130.

29 Fredegar 3.71, which telescopes events, placing them around 575.

of a rupture between Sigibert and Chilperic following Galswinth's murder, which occurred in 569 or 570. Given the Byzantine influence so evident in both Sigibert's and Chilperic policies, it is important to note that the Visigothic king Athanagild, father-in-law to both of the brothers, had been on good terms with the Byzantine emperors Justinian and Justin II until his death in 567, when king Leovigild departed from his predecessor's policy.[30] Galswinth's murder thus may have also been motivated by Chilperic's desire to preserve his Visigothic linkage after dynastic and religious affairs had changed when kings Leova and Leovigild acceded to the throne in Spain. Chilperic's alleged murder of his wife, causing her sister's desire for revenge, thus may be paralleled with a rupture of Sigibert's and Chilperic's Visigothic policy which was crucial for conditions in Western Gaul including Tours and Poitiers. From now on Sigibert pursued a policy of offense against his half-brother Chilperic, attempting to gain parts of Chilperic's Neustrian territories and to subject his brother's army to his dominion.[31] When he eventually was murdered during military operations against his brother near Paris in 575, Gregory and later Fredegar both sardonically attributed this murder to the instigation of Chilperic, or rather to his new wife Fredegund.[32]

Sigibert's murder, followed by Chilperic's taking possession of Sigibert's territories including Tours and Poitiers, marks the end of Book 4 of Gregory's histories. The inclusion of a schedule of the years from the creation of the world down to Sigibert's death shows that Gregory saw this as an important caesura in historical process. Fittingly, Book 5 is introduced by a prologue laying out the perils of intra-dynastic war: "It gives me no pleasure to write of all the different civil wars which afflicted the Frankish people and their rulers; what is even worse, we now seem to see the moment draw near which our Lord foretold as the real beginning of our sorrows: 'The father shall rise up against the son, and the son against the father; brother shall rise up against brother, and kinsman against kinsman.' The Franks ought, indeed, to have been warned by the sad fate of their earlier kings, who, through their inability ever to agree with

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30   Margarita Vallejo Girvéz, "The Treaties between Justinian and Athanagild and the Legality of the Byzantine Possessions on the Iberian Peninsula," *Byzantion* 66 (1996), 208–218. Ian N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 451–751* (London, 1993), 170 drew attention to the fact that the murder of Galswintha, Chilperic's wife, followed soon after Athanagild's death. By contrast, Brunhild obviously kept her father's Byzantine link: see Andrew Gillett, "Love and Grief in Post-Imperial Diplomacy: The Letters of Brunhild," in *Power and Emotions in the Roman World and Late Antiquity*, (eds.) Barbara Sidwell and Danijel Dzino (Piscataway/NJ, 2010), 127–165.

31   Fredegar 3.71.

32   *Hist.* 4.51; Fredegar 3.71.

each other were killed by their enemies."[33] Tellingly, Gregory praises the unity achieved by Clovis and posts an emphatic warning against luxury, discord and war at the beginning of his narrative of the following years.

12.2.3 *Changing Alliances, a. 575–584*

Modern historians have emphasized that the divisions carried out in the years 561 and 568 exacerbated the dynastic competitiveness inherent in the Merovingian house and shaped the quarrels and civil wars that ensued.[34] To Gregory the decennium of king Chilperic's domination over Paris, Tours, and Poitiers (a. 575–584) appears as the darkest period of Merovingian and Gallic history. After Sigibert's murder in 575, his widow Brunhild was detained at Rouen by Sigibert's brother Chilperic, whom Gregory held responsible for Sigibert's murder through the machinations of his wife Fredegund. At Rouen, Merovech, Chilperic's son, married Brunhild (*Hist.* 5.2, s.a. 576), obviously in order to secure some of Sigibert's territories in Western Gaul at Chilperic's expense.[35] Praetextatus, metropolitan bishop of Rouen, celebrated the marriage between Merovech and Brunhild in an effort to legitimize their incestuous union, and the bishop also tried to win support for the couple against Chilperic among the people of his *civitas* by asking them to swear fidelity to them. Angry, Chilperic had Merovech tonsured and ordered him detained in a monastery, though he escaped to Tours (*Hist.* 5.14, s.a. 576). Chilperic also set in motion a trial against Praetextatus to be held in Paris. Gregory, who took part in the synod judging the bishop, reports on the trial in an exemplary style designed to reveal the relationship between bishop and king.[36] Bemoaning a lack of solidarity among his fellow-bishops in his account, Gregory still had to acknowledge that Praetextatus confessed the crimes of which he was accused. Praetextatus was deposed and exiled, and soon after, Merovech, now on the

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[33]   *Hist.* 5, prol; transl. Thorpe 253; on the interpretation of this passage see the different views of Guy Halsall, "The Preface to Book v of Gregory of Tours' Histories: Its Form, Context and Significance," *English Historical Review* 122 (2007), 297–317, and Murray, "Chronology and the Composition of the Histories of Gregory of Tours," 165–167.

[34]   Ewig, "Die fränkischen Teilungen," 139.

[35]   The dower of Galswinth's and of Brunhild's marriages may have been relevant here.

[36]   *Hist.* 5.18. On this, see Stefan Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition und merowingisches Königtum: Zum Rechtscharakter politischer Herrschaft in Burgund im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 134 (Göttingen 1997), 443–460; Nira Gradowicz-Pancer, "Femmes royales et violences anti-épiscopales à l'époque mérovingienne: Frédégonde et le meurtre de l'évêque Prétextat," in *Bischofsmord im Mittelalter – Murder of Bishops*, (eds.) Natalie Fryde and Dirk Reitz, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 191 (Göttingen, 2003), 37–50.

run from sanctuary at Tours and surrounded by his enemies, had himself killed by one of his servants (*Hist.* 5.18, s.a. 577).

These affairs had an impact on Tours as well. In a series of narratives concluding Book 5 of his histories, Gregory first gives an account of his relationship with Leudast, count of Tours in the 570 s (*Hist.* 5.47–49, s.a. 580). Originally of servile birth, Leudast had made his career at the court of Charibert and later was made count of Tours, because of, in Gregory's view, the sins of the locals. As such he did not accept the transfer of Tours to Sigibert in 568, but went over to Chilperic's side. In late 579, possibly after his removal as count by Chilperic, Leudast's involvement in a plot came to light that aimed to depose Gregory as bishop and appoint a local priest named Riculf in his place. Leudast accused local clerics from Tours – intimates of Gregory – of treason at the royal court and also brought forward charges against Gregory himself, who had to clear himself by oath after a trial before his fellow bishops and the king. He had been charged with saying Fredegund was an adulteress. These narratives at the end of Book 5 emphasize the difficult position the bishop of Tours had under Chilperic's rule, and end fittingly (*Hist.* 5.50) with a prophecy of Chilperic's death.[37]

The status of Paris in Gregory's narrative still remained controversial. In Book 6 Gregory pays extraordinary attention to Paris in order to portray Chilperic as a perjuring king and to represent his eventual assassination as a consequence of divine will. On Easter 583 Chilperic entered Paris, and in order to avoid being struck by the curse of the oaths that had been sworn to protect the treaty on the division of Charibert's kingdom in 568, he had relics carried in front of him – or at least this is how Gregory suggests we interpret the procession into the city (*Hist.* 6.27).[38] But Gregory's notion that Chilperic's transfer of relics to Paris in 583 was intended to appease or counteract the saintly guardians of the treaty of 568 is probably partisan or idiosyncratic. In fact, from other passages in Gregory's histories, it can be inferred that Chilperic had already been residing in Paris for seven years following king Sigibert's assassination in 575.[39] But here again Gregory's sense of dramaturgy and his providential reading of events led him to depart from the circumstantial significance of the event he was describing. What mattered more to Gregory than Chilperic's entry into Paris on

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37   Gregory reports Leudast's death later in his work: *Hist.* 6.32 (s.a. 583).

38   See also Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 148, who suggests a structural significance to the passage.

39   *Hist.* 5.1; 5.18; 5.32; 5.34; 6.5; 6.17; 6.19; see Bernhard Jussen, *Spiritual Kinship as Social Practice: Godparenthood and Adoption in the Early Middle Ages* (Newark, 2000), 170 n. 300. See also Ewig, "Die fränkischen Teilungen und Teilreiche," 141.

Easter 583 was the presence of his son Theuderic, whom the king intended to have baptised, with Ragnemod, bishop of Paris, standing as the boy's godfather.[40] Theuderic's death in the following year (*Hist.* 6.34, s.a. 584) was followed up by a political crisis,[41] culminating in Chilperic's murder near Paris in late in 584, giving Gregory a stunning finish to Book 6.[42]

This narrative line is supplemented by a second one focussing on Chilperic's relationship with the Visigothic king Leovigild, whose persecution of Catholics is duly noted, and efforts to contract a marriage between Leovigild's son Reccared and Chilperic's daughter Rigunth that only unravelled with Chilperic's assassination.[43] Twice he mentions Visigothic envoys stopping at Tours with whom he had religious exchanges highlighting the merits of Catholicism versus Arianism (*Hist.* 5.43; 6.40). Quite obviously, a council held by Leovigild in 580, which sought to make Arianism a common confession of all inhabitants of the Visigothic kingdom,[44] marked a turning-point for Gregory (*Hist.* 5.38), with the Frankish-Visigothic dynastic link now acquiring an heretical dimension between the Arian king Leovigild and Chilperic, who pursued theological pronouncements on christological issues, the character of which Gregory brands as heretical (*Hist.* 5.44). Gregory also alludes to the fact that the marriage link between Chilperic and Leovigild was initiated when the latter was fighting against his son Hermenegild (*Hist.* 5.38; 6.18), husband of Sigibert's and Brunhild's daughter Ingund, who had converted to Catholicism and won Byzantine support for his revolt against his father.[45]

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40   Ragnemod belonged to the faction of king Chilperic who had appointed him bishop of Paris in the year 576. See Jussen, *Spiritual Kinship*, 168–170.

41   *Hist.* 6.34–35. The death caused Chilperic to attempt to postpone a marriage project with the Visigothic king Leovigild; and his wife Fredegund to accuse the prefect Mummolus of having used magic practices that ultimately killed the king's son. See Nicole Zeddies, *Religio et sacrilegium: Studien zur Inkriminierung von Magie, Häresie und Heidentum (4.-7. Jahrhundert)* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), 248–251.

42   *Hist.* 6.46. See the very different interpretations of Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours* 48–51, 148; and Guy Halsall, "Nero and Herod? The Death of Chilperic and Gregory's Writing of History," in *The World of Gregory of Tours,* (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian N. Wood (Leiden, 2002), 337–350.

43   *Hist.* 5.38, 43; 6.40, 45

44   Markus Mülke, "Romana religio oder Catholica fides? Der Westgotenkönig Leovigild und das arianische Reichskonzil von 580 n. Chr. in Toledo," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 43 (2009), 53–69.

45   Walter Goffart, "Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: The Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald (579–585)," *Traditio* 13 (1957), 73–118

A third narrative line, resolving itself, once again, in Chilperic's murder, was the dramatic shift in domestic political alliances. In 577, an agreement was concluded between kings Guntram of Burgundy and Childebert II of Austrasia at Pompierre (Stone Bridge), whereby the childless king Guntram adopted his nephew as heir to his Burgundian kingdom (*Hist*. 5.17).[46] Austrasia's policy at this time was influenced by Childebert's mother Brunhild and the 'guardian' Gogo, once probably architect of Sigibert's policies.[47] When Gogo died in 581 and was replaced by Wandelenus (*Hist*. 6.1), a group of aristocrats, prominent among them Egidius, metropolitan bishop of Rheims, whose province overlapped Chilperic's territory, launched some kind of palace coup at the Austrasian court, neutralizing Brunhild and directing the under-age king Childebert to enter into a new alliance with his then (and temporarily) childless uncle Chilperic. By the Treaty of Nogent, Chilperic designated his nephew heir to his Neustrian kingdom (*Hist*. 6.3). The treaty was intended to create a common front of Austrasian and Neustrian forces against Guntram and coincides with an Austrasian decision to invite Gundovald, an unrecognized son of Chlothar I, who had taken refuge in Constantinople, to come to Francia with Byzantine financial support and to claim Guntram's territories (*Hist*. 6.24). Whatever designs this arrival were supposed to further were soon aborted. Things changed soon, however, for in 583 a mutiny within the Austrasian army seems to have shifted the frame of coalitions once again. By early 584, there are once again signs of good relations between Austrasia and Burgundy (*Hist*. 6.33). By the Fall of that year, Chilperic was dead.

Gregory's 'obituary' of Chilperic, concluding Book 6 (c. 46), was a general reckoning of the king and has to be ranked among the most important passages in the *Histories*. In addition to the charges Gregory had already put forward against Chilperic in Books 4–6, this passage brands Chilperic as a cruel tyrant, the "Nero and Herod of our time," who was generally hostile to the church and the bishops in particular, abusing the process of episcopal elections, destroying wills intended to benefit the churches, and trying to reclaim church income that largely consisted of former fiscal revenues. It is important to note that many of the charges put forward against Chilperic may also be interpreted as a continuation of imperial government practice with regard to

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46   See also subsequent agreements mentioned by Gregory in *Hist*. 6.31, 41.

47   On Gogo, see Bruno Dumézil, "Gogo et ses amis: écriture, échanges et ambitions dans un réseau aristocratique de la fin du VIᵉ siècle," *Revue historique* 643 (2007), 553–593. On the term *nutricius/nutritor*, see Murray, above, ch . 6, at nn. 38, 44.

fiscal income, religious policy and royal representation.[48] Gregory had no liking for this, for his criteria derived not only from his personal experience in Tours, but also from his picture of Chilperic as a heretical ruler, aligning himself with the heretical Visigoths.

12.2.4 *From Austraso-Byzantine Intervention to Austraso-Burgundian Balance, a. 584–592*

Chilperic's assassination in late 584 marks another turning-point in Gallic history. An inquiry was launched into Chilperic's death by king Guntram (*Hist.* 7.21–22). Again, Tours and Gregory became involved in this Neustro-Burgundian affair. When Chilperic's former chamberlain Eberulf, who also was a resident of Tours, came under suspicion of having been involved in the king's murder, he took flight from Chilperic's court to Tours finding lengthy asylum in Saint Martin's church – the reason for this being not just the fame of the sanctuary but surely Gregory's role as godfather to Eberulf's son (*Hist.* 7.21–22, 29). Months later, after the killing of Eberulf in Saint Martin's, Guntram's suspicion, Gregory tells us, also fell on Theodore of Marseilles (*Hist.* 8.5).[49] Gregory generally exculpates Theodore, whom he regards as a saintly figure persecuted by a paranoid Guntram, and acknowledges and justifies, on practical grounds, the bishop of Marseilles' involvement in welcoming the Pretender Gundovald to Gaul, for the bishop was a representative of the Austrasian court during Childebert's minority and only following orders, likely the crux of Guntram's suspicions.[50] A direct connection between the Gundovald revolt and the assassination of Chilperic that followed immediately and threatened Guntram, in particular, is a question Gregory's narrative raises but never resolves.

Since Chilperic left behind a newborn son called Chlothar as sole heir to his throne, it was Chilperic's brother Guntram who sought to secure his nephew's kingdom by exacting an oath of fidelity to himself and Chlothar, while he attempted to sideline Chlothar's mother Fredegund and revoked some of Chilperic's legal decisions (*Hist.* 7.7, 19–20). At the same time, however, Guntram claimed authority over those parts of Charibert's former kingdom which Chilperic had subjected to his control by force after Sigibert's

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48 Bernhard Jussen, "Um 567. Wie die poströmischen Könige sich in Selbstdarstellung übten," in *Die Macht des Königs: Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*, (ed.) idem (Munich, 2005), 14–26.

49 And cf. *Hist.* 8.12.

50 *Hist.* 6.24 where Theodore defends himself before Guntram: "'I did nothing on my own,' he said, 'but only what our lords and chief officials commanded me.'"

assassination in 575. Guntram exacted an oath of fidelity from those western cities such as Tours and Poitiers which had once belonged to the kingdom of Charibert and Sigibert, but had become subjected to Chilperic in the meantime. In doing so, he denied claims of his nephew Childebert by charging him with having made an alliance with Chilperic against him earlier on; his ultimate legal argument for this was the treaty on the division of Charibert's kingdom, which had included a clause that whoever contrary to the treaty entered Paris would forfeit his share.[51] Whereas the inhabitants of Tours and Poitiers wanted to stay with the Austrasian Childebert and reject Guntram, the latter asserted his authority over these cities by use of military force (*Hist.* 7.12–13, 24).

While much of this narrative at first glance appears to have been an internal affair among the kings, the Visigothic alliances of Austrasia and Neustria and the involvement of Byzantine support for the 'Pretender' Gundovald suggest that we are dealing here with a complex situation, in which King Guntram sought to save himself against another Merovingian's claim by establishing himself as the senior Merovingian whose task was to preserve the dynasty from extermination. Gregory's report on Gundovald's dealings with Magnulf of Bordeaux echoes allegations that the Pretender may have intended to eliminate the young kings Childebert and Chlothar, too, in order to extinguish the existing Merovingian dynasty (*Hist.* 7.26–27, s.a. 585). As a repudiated son of king Chlothar I, Gundovald had first been accepted as a Merovingian by kings Charibert and seemingly also by Sigibert in the 560 s (*Hist.* 6.24), before the latter had his hair cut and detained him at Cologne.[52] Gundovald then took flight to Italy and eventually to Constantinople only to return to Gaul in 582 with Byzantine financial support on invitation of the Austrasian court.[53] In 584, right after Chilperic's death, he was raised on a shield to become accepted as king, and thereafter attempted to create a kingdom for himself (*Hist.* 7.10). To achieve this, Gundovald laid claim, in the name of Childebert, to Sigibert's former cities in South Western Gaul that had come under control of king Guntram of Burgundy after Chilperic's death

51   *Hist.* 7.6; on this clause which reappears in the treaty of Andelot, see Esders, "Avenger of all Perjury."

52   Bachrach, *The Anatomy of a Little War*, 3–30.

53   Goffart, "Byzantine Policy in the West"; Constantin Zuckerman, "Qui a rappelé en Gaule le Ballomer Gundovald?" *Francia* 25 (1998), 1–18; see also Marc Widdowson, "Gundovald, 'Ballomer' and the Politics of Identity," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'histoire* 86 (2008), 607–622; and most recently Walter Goffart, "The Frankish Pretender Gundovald, 582–585. A Crisis of Merovingian Blood," *Francia* 39 (2012), 1–27.

(*Hist.* 7.14). Enjoying some sort of Austrasian support, he exacted an oath of fidelity on behalf of Childebert from these cities while he made Guntram's cities swear fidelity to himself with the intention of taking Paris as capital (*Hist.* 7.26–27). Thus, Gundovald's action may also be seen as reflecting the long-term impact of the division of Charibert's kingdom of 568 with a deliberate attempt to form an alliance with the Austrasian kingdom and to replace king Guntram of Burgundy (*Hist.* 7.32), but also to take over Chilperic's possessions including the marriage portion that had been given to Chilperic's daughter Rigunth (*Hist.* 7.10, 31).

In the end Gundovald failed. The main reason for this was Guntram's renewed acceptance of Childebert II as heir to his kingdom, this time acknowledging the now adult Childebert as king and restoring to him the heritage of his father Sigibert's kingdom including possessions that had been under dispute (*Hist.* 7.33–34). Accepting Childebert's rule was thus meant to delegitimize Gundovald and to induce his supporters to change to the Austrasian side. Eventually their shift of loyalty paved the way for Guntram's siege of Convenae, which ended with Gundovald's death in 585 (*Hist.* 7.38). In the aftermath of Gundovald's death the treasure of the rebels was shared between Guntram and Childebert and Guntram's army took revenge on some of Gundovald's leading supporters (*Hist.* 8. 6, 20).

A final agreement between Guntram and Childebert was completed by the treaty of Andelot in 587, completed at a time of crisis when Austrasian magnates hostile to Childebert had mounted a plot against the young king, whereby they sought to kill him and control the kingdom and the king's sons. Guntram learned of the plot, informed his nephew, and the rebels were put down. Gregory may have played a part in negotiating the treaty on Childebert's side.[54] While Guntram had asserted that according to the treaty of 568 he was entitled to claim the whole of Sigibert's portion of Charibert's kingdom (*Hist.* 7.6),[55] at Andelot he, once again, acknowledged Childebert's immediate claim to his father's heritage. Compromises were still necessary; for example: Guntram's control of Paris was acknowledged in the sense that he kept Sigibert's and Chilperic's former shares of it which Childebert would eventually inherit. Childebert got parts of his father's portions of Charibert's

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[54] *Hist.* 9.10–11, 20. On the treaty's terms, see Anna-Maria Drabek, "Der Merowingervertrag von Andelot aus dem Jahr 587," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 78 (1970), 34–41. On its importance in Gregory's narrative, see Marc Widdowson, "Merovingian Partitions. A 'Genealogical Charter'?" *Early Medieval Europe* 17 (2009), 1–22, at 15–21, whose conclusions regarding the earlier partitions of Merovingian Gaul I do not agree with.

[55] See above n. 51.

kingdom, including Tours and Poitiers which had been turned over to him in early 585; Childebert received the disputed city of Senlis in Neustria, for which Guntram received in recompense the city of Ressons further north of Senlis. While the treaty of Andelot is an important document of the history of the Merovingian kingdoms, it should also be seen as a significant attempt to strengthen and consolidate the Merovingian dynasty's rule over Gaul. While both kings appointed each other as heir in case of their death, Guntram promised to accept Childebert's sons Theudebert II (born 585) and Theuderic II (born 587) as their father's heirs and successors. Among the treaty's provisions we find equally important clauses concerning the maintenance of the dynasty's women, including Guntram's daughter Chlothild, Childebert's mother Brunhild, his wife Faileuba and their daughter Chlodosind. A third feature of this treaty is an attempt to gain control over the military forces available to the kings. While the loyalty of each king's *leudes* was secured by strictly forbidding them to change sides and by the removal of disloyal *leudes*, it was agreed that members of the aristocracy should regain lands which they had lost unlawfully due to the territorial divisions and civil wars. It is remarkable that Chlothar's I death was assumed here as some kind of general terminus, for only claims arising since 561 were eligible for redress. The treaty of Andelot had consequences for Childebert's and Guntram's dealing with the Visigoths, whose king Reccared had just converted to Catholicism and agreed to act as an ally against the Lombards in Italy.

While the treaty of Andelot served to establish a fragile balance between Childebert and Guntram, the latter's acceptance of the child Chlothar II as king and Guntram's willingness to act as his godfather is an important theme running through Books 8–10 of the *Histories* (*Hist*. 8.1, 9; 10.28). Guntram failed in his attempt to exercise direct control of Neustria on behalf of Chlothar II (*Hist*. 8.18), but at the same time Gregory attempts to convey the impression that Guntram, for all the previous conflicts with his kinsmen, highly prized the preservation of the Merovingian dynasty and its memory (*Hist*. 8.10). This included Chlothar II as well despite doubts about his paternity raised by Guntram and Gregory (*Hist*. 8.9). Just after having recounted the terms of the treaty of Andelot, Gregory noted Guntram's intention to secure his nephew Chlothar a small portion of his kingdom (*Hist*. 9.20). At the end of the *Histories*, just before recapitulating the miracles of Abbot Aredius and the deeds of the bishops of Tours, Gregory places strong emphasis on Guntram as defender of the Merovingian dynasty. When Guntram finally presided at Chlothar's baptism near Paris in 591, his nephew Childebert's envoys in a panic charged him with having broken the treaty by making Chlothar II king of Paris, one of the principal Austrasian fears. Guntram insisted, however, that godfathership of his nephew Chlothar II, who was seven years old by then, would by no means

cause any infringement of the treaty of Andelot.[56] When Gregory wrote this, finishing up his *Histories*, King Guntram had already died (a. 592).[57] Gregory's account of the baptism of Chlothar II and of Guntram's earnest mission to carry this out, after many disappointments, makes an important statement on political relations in his own time and had unexpected portent for the future. Given the fact that Gregory, who died around 594, could not know how things would continue after Childebert's death in 596 and under the subsequent rule of Brunhild, Theudebert II and Theuderic II, his care in reporting on the treaty of Andelot and its ongoing validity provides a kind of snapshot of an important historical situation. It may thus be regarded as Gregory's double legacy – as both historian and politician in an age of civil wars.

12.3 Structures, Themes, and Tensions in Gallic Politics

The complicated nature of the history of events in the second half of the 6th century and Gregory's way of narrating stories and interpreting historical causes in terms of personal ties, loyalties and God's reactions to man's actions make it difficult to provide a more structural framework to Merovingian politics. In general, it may be said that the internal quarrels within the Merovingian dynasty had a wide-ranging effect on society of Gaul as a whole and vice versa. Legislative texts such as church councils or Chlothar's famous edict of Paris, issued in 614 to put an end to the civil wars, contain general rules which suggest that much of the detailed information Gregory gives indeed has to be placed within a more general interpretative framework. The histories contain lots of information and may to some extent be supplemented by other sources in order to offer a more structural view on Gallic politics in the 6th century. It is therefore possible to place Gregory's narrative in the context of some wider issues, three of which shall be dealt with in more detail here.

12.3.1 *The Merovingian Dynasty and Legitimacy in the Sixth Century*
Kingship in 6th-century Gaul was centered on the Merovingian dynasty.[58] This is evident in the fact that even usurpers such as Munderic[59] (*Hist.* 3.14) or

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56 And see *Hist.* 9.20 where Guntram acknowledges he will give Chlothar "two or three cities somewhere, so that he shall not seem to be disinherited," and asserts this will not disturb Childebert.

57 Gregory acknowledges his death in *VM* 37.

58 Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 89–91.

59 Munderic, probably of Merovingian descent, claimed to be king around 532 and was put down by Theuderic I in Austrasia. Since Gregory is our only source on him, his identity is

Gundovald claimed to be related to the dynasty in one way or another. Election, consent, military ritual and oaths of fidelity were important means to legitimize kingship, but it could not supplant dynastic legitimacy. This legitimacy, however, depended almost entirely on the perceived paternal descent from a king. Since some Merovingians practiced concubinage and even polygamy, having several liaisons at the same time, a mother's ancestry did not matter very much, though we find some debate on this issue in Gregory's narrative on Charibert, Guntram and Chilperic.[60] This is also shown by his explanation that Sigibert married the Visigothic noblewoman Brunhild in order to put himself at distance from his brothers (*Hist.* 4. 27). A contemporary debate on incestuous marriages (to be dealt with below) points to this, too.[61]

Despite such definition of royal legitimacy along the paternal line, the important role played by queens becomes evident in the second half of the 6th century.[62] This is not only evident from Gregory's depiction of queens like Fredegund or Brunhild exercising profound influence over the kings (in particular of minor age), but also from royal marriage practice and the inclusion of regulations on dower as we find in the treaty of Andelot.[63] Attempts to remove Charibert's widow and daughters after his death support this assumption, while the drama that followed Chilperic's murder of his Visigothic wife Galswinth indicates that external marriages tended to change the framework in which royal power had to be exercised. Royal marriages arranged with local women, sometimes of low birth, and also incestuous marriages with a predecessor's widow, both of which we find in the 6th century, suggest that very different marriage strategies could be practised at the same time and that royal marriages were subject of a contemporary debate. Since politics were centered on the royal court, aristocratic groups also tried to get access to the queen, a critical consideration when there was a regency of a young king.

The preservation of the Merovingian dynasty is one great narrative line of Gregory's *Histories*. Attempts to save the dynasty from the threat of extinction

a matter of speculation, as is evidenced by Heike Grahn-Hoek, "Gundulfus subregulus – eine genealogische Brücke zwischen Merowingern und Karolingern?." *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 59 (2003), 1–47, suggesting even the possibility of Munderic being a relative of Gregory of Tours.

60   See e.g. *Hist.* 4.26–28; 5.20

61   See below, n. 88–99.

62   Janet L. Nelson, "Queens as Jezebels. The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History," in *Medieval Women*, (ed.) Derek Baker (Oxford, 1978), 31–77; Martina Hartmann, *Die Königin im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2009), 59–86.

63   See above nn. 54–55.

by strengthening its internal cohesion included adoption and godparentship.[64] Rules of succession were fixed only to some extent. Gaul becoming divided up as it happened in 511 or 561 among the sons of a single king attests to a principle of paternal succession, whereas brothers succeeding into their brothers' share was a much more complicated issue as can be seen in the disputed succession to Chlodomer, Theuderic I and Charibert I.[65] The practice of dividing up a kingdom had to take into account many factors such as the consent of nobles,[66] the incorporation of a part of *Francia* as the heartland (until 561)[67] and other preexisting traditions.[68] It is for this reason, not by chance, that Chlothar I gave the son who would rule Austrasia the name Sigibert and Guntram of Burgundy gave his son the name of the Burgundian king Gundobad.[69] Chilperic giving his sons the names Merovech and Clovis attests to a deliberate reference to the Merovingian dynasty and its heartland.[70] Given this, it caused serious problems for the Merovingian dynasty when King Charibert died unexpectedly and without sons in late 567 or early 568. At this time Sigibert and Chilperic already had entered their Visigothic marriages, which suggests that they were thinking beyond the Gallic context.[71] Sigibert's alliance with the emperor Justin II, which was directed against the Lombards, attests to wide-ranging political ambitions among the Austrasian branch of the Merovingian dynasty.[72]

Although Gregory mentions alliances and diplomatic exchange between emperors in Constantinople and Merovingian kings on several occasions,[73]

64   On the political importance of godparentship in this period, which contrasts with its use in the late Roman period, see Jussen, *Spiritual Kinship.*

65   *Hist.* 3.6; 18; 23; 7.6.

66   Ian N. Wood, "Kings, Kingdoms and Consent," in *Early Medieval Kingship*, (eds.) Peter Hayes Sawyer and Ian N. Wood. (Leeds, 1977), 6–29.

67   Eugen Ewig, "Überlegungen zu den merowingischen und karolingischen Teilungen," in *Nascita dell'Europa ed Europa Carolingia. Un'equazione de verificare*. Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo (Spoleto, 1981), 2: 225–253.

68   See the discussion in Reinhold Kaiser, *Das römische Erbe und das Merowingerreich*, 3rd edition (Munich, 2004), pp. 92–93.

69   On Merovingian namegiving see the evidence collected by Eugen Ewig, "Die Namengebung bei den ältesten Frankenkönigen und im merowingischen Königshaus. Mit genealogischen Tafeln und Notizen," *Francia* 18/1 (1991), 21–70.

70   Alexander Callander Murray, "Post vocantur Merohingii: Fredegar, Merowech, and 'Sacral Kingship,'" in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, (ed.) idem (Toronto, 1998), 121–152, at 145–146.

71   As probably had already done their brother Charibert, see above n. 17.

72   Goffart, "Byzantine Policy in the West."

73   Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Imperium* (Opladen, 1983), quite often argued e silentio and therefore downplayed the relevance of Byzantine-Frankish relations; but see

Eastern Rome did not matter very much to him nor did he admire imperial rulership except as continuation of that Christian tradition of rulership inaugurated by the emperor Constantine.[74] It therefore is not clear from Gregory that Sigibert in Metz and later on Chilperic in Paris and Soissons developed representation, court and governing style in a "Byzantine" fashion, though the mentioning of Chilperic's circus games must be seen as criticism.[75] These were models of rulership which Gregory, despite or because of his senatorial ancestry, did not appreciate; for him *imitatio imperii* was not worthy for its own sake. When he praises the emperor Tiberius II contrasting him with his father Justin II, this was because of his policy of giving alms as a Christian ruler (*Hist.* 4.40; 5.19). By comparison, Chilperic's emperor-like theological aspirations and his alliance with the Arian branch of the Visigothic dynasty both were regarded as heretical from the standpoint of a Christian approach to rulership as favoured by large parts of the Gallic episcopate.

12.3.2   *Kings, Bishops and Councils in Sixth-Century Gaul*

Whereas political divisions changed and Roman provincial organisation lost its importance in secular government due to the emergence of new kingdoms and their partition, it was in fact the church, where Roman patterns of provincial organisation persisted. Councils on different levels – diocese, ecclesiastical province, kingdom – were an important means for the bishops to christianise Gallic society by articulating their aims and communicating their expectations to the rulers, who were asked to confirm conciliar legislation. Conciliar decisions were based on the idea of *consensus*[76] – which is one reason why Gregory regards discord between bishops as instigated by the devil. In the 6th century the rich evidence provided by conciliar legislation shows a kind of routine in the way the bishops dealt with certain topics and tried to impose ecclesiastical norms on Gallic society by use of excommunication.[77] Above all, by reiterating, confirming, and collecting decisions, 6th-century bishops deliberately created

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Evangelos Chrysos, "Byzantine Diplomacy, A.D. 300–800: Means and Ends," in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, (eds.) Jonathan Shephard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot, 1992), 25–39, at 31–32.

74   In this he appears to be quite different from Fredegar.

75   On Sigibert's court see Yitzhak Hen, *Roman Barbarians: The Royal Court and Culture in the Early Medieval West* (Basingstoke, 2007), 98–99; on Chilperic, see Jussen, "Um 567," 17–26.

76   Gregory I. Halfond, "Cum Consensu Omnium: Frankish Church Councils from Clovis to Charlemagne," *History Compass* 5 (2007), 539–559.

77   Gregory I. Halfond, *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, AD 511–768.* Medieval Law and Its Practice, 6 (Leiden, 2010), 1–28.

a tradition of canon law; this tradition, originating in late antiquity and including papal decretals, was enriched by Gallic councils and eventually preserved in canon law collections. The process of compilation may be illustrated by the survival of two such early collections composed in Southern Gaul in the 6th and early 7th centuries, both containing papal letters and Gallic canons along with the provincial list of the *Notitia Galliarum*.[78] More famous is the *Collectio vetus Gallica*, the first canon law collection with a systematic arrangement of its material, produced around 600, perhaps in Lyons.[79]

At the same time, the Merovingian kings used councils as consulting bodies and as an important means of pursuing their religious policy, often adapting imperial models to their *regnum*. Recruited to a large extent from among the senatorial class,[80] the bishops in 6th-century Gaul were acutely conscious that Christianity and the church had been established in Gaul long before the Franks erected their kingdoms and were likely to take the view that the rule of the Frankish kings, Catholics all, should be defined by the Gallic or Roman church. The Merovingian kings, for their part, knew well the long history of the ecclesiastical institution over which they exercised tremendous power, but they were also attuned to the role that the Church and bishops played in maintaining and

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78   Paris, BN. Cod. lat 12097 and Cologne, Dombiliothek, Cod. lat. 212, both manuscripts written between ca 550 and 620; on the former see Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition*, 31–55, and Wolfgang Kaiser, "Beobachtungen zur Collectio Corbeiensis und Collectio Bigotiana (Hs. Paris BN lat. 12097 und Hs. Paris BN lat. 2796)," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung* 92 (2006), 63–110, at 64–92; for the former, see the BnF Gallica website (http://gallica.bnf.fr/), and use the search terms 'Canons de conciles et lettres de papes'; and for the latter, see http://www.ceec.uni-koeln.de/ceec-cgi/kleioc/0010/exec/katl/%22kn28-0212%22. On both collections see also Lotte Kéry, *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages, ca. 400–1140* (Washington D.C., 1999), 43–48. On the *Notitia Galliarum* and its importance for church organization in post-Roman Gaul see Jill Harries, "Church and State in the Notitia Galliarum," *Journal of Roman Studies* 68 (1978), 26–43.

79   Hubert Mordek, *Kirchenrecht und Reform im Frankenreich: Die Collectio Vetus Gallica, die älteste systematische Kanonessammlung des fränkischen Gallien, Studien und Edition*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 1 (Berlin/New York, 1975). See also Halfond, *Frankish Church Councils*, 163–184.

80   Martin Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien. Zur Kontinuität römischer Führungsschichten vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert: Soziale, prosopographische und bildungsgeschichtliche Aspekte*, Beihefte der Francia 5 (Munich, 1976); for a modified view, see Steffen Patzold, "Zur Sozialstruktur des Episkopats und zur Ausbildung bischöflicher Herrschaft in Gallien zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter," in *Völker, Reiche und Namen im frühen Mittelalter*, (eds.) Matthias Becher and Stefanie Dick, MittelalterStudien 22, (Munich 2010), 121–140.

stabilizing their rule in Gaul in material and immaterial ways. When the relationship is looked at from this double, but hardly exclusive perspective, it seems reasonable to consider the fields of action in which cooperation, tension and conflict might arise. The rich evidence given by conciliar legislation suggests that episcopal elections, church property, the status of clerics, incest, asylum and heresy were among the topics that mattered most to the Gallic episcopate in the 6th century.[81]

From at least the early 6th century onwards, the election and appointment of bishops was a highly controversial issue. According to canon law tradition, a bishop had to be elected by the clergy and the people of the diocese. But in 6th-century Gaul, as Gregory reports time and again, the royal court became strongly involved in the actual appointment, which meant, in practical terms, the necessity of royal consent in the customary canonical election procedure. Though it was required by canon law that candidates had to be born in the very diocese to which they would be appointed as bishop,[82] local aristocracies were by no means always successful in installing as bishop one of their own. Rather, they had to be on good terms with the king. In addition, there is plenty of evidence for kings intervening directly to appoint an outsider as bishop, in particular if he was known at the court and had experience in managing worldly matters; occasionally Gregory utters sharp criticism of money paid for obtaining an episcopal see (*Hist.* 4.35) and of laymen being appointed bishops by kings (*Hist.* 6.37–38; 6.46). As late as 614, after the civil wars, the bishops at the kingdom-wide council of Paris re-asserted the claim that elections should be carried out according to canon law; but a week later an assembly at Paris held under Chlothar II, while reiterating its commitment to the canons, simply noted that the king could also appoint worthy palace officials to episcopal positions.[83]

Civil wars and territorial divisions increased the friction and Gregory's relationship with Chilperic and his trial before king shows the perils and suspicions that naturally arose when kings did not get the bishops of their choice

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81   Pontal, *Die Synoden im Merowingerreich*, 219–275; Halfond, *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils*, 99–130.

82   See, e.g. the council of Clichy (626/627), c. 28, MGH Conc. 1: 200.

83   Council of Paris, cc. 1–3, MGH Conc. 1: 186; Chlothar's Edict of Paris, c. 1, *Capitularia regum Francorum* 1, MGH LL 2.1, (ed.) Alfred Boretius, 21. See Carlo Servatius, "Per ordinationem principis ordinetur. Zum Modus der Bischofsernennung im Edikt Chlothars II. vom Jahr 614," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 84 (1973), 1–29; and most recently, Andreas Thier, *Hierarchie und Autonomie: Regelungstraditionen der Bischofsbestellung in der Geschichte des kirchlichen Wahlrechts bis 1140*, Recht im ersten Jahrtausend 1, Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte 257 (Frankfurt am Main, 2011), 220–223.

and bishops found themselves confronting unexpected political realities. The Neustrian loyalist Bishop Bertram of Le Mans, whose will (a. 616) survives in a later copy and contains a long lists of possessions, calculated the costs of his loyalty to Chlothar II, for he had sworn an indissoluble oath of fidelity towards his king and, as his follower, by his telling, was dispossessed and deprived of his property repeatedly on that account.[84]

Bishops were expected to be loyal to the kings that put them in office, but once consecrated, they could think of themselves as having been appointed by God, and in fact Gregory's *Histories* may be read as a plaidoyer for bishops not needlessly bowing to the will of unjust kings. The speeches Gregory puts into the mouth of bishop Praetextatus of Rouen, when summoned by Chilperic and just before his death, attest to the Gallic episcopate's self-consciousness in the 6th century and to their idea of *iustitia* (*Hist*. 5.18; 8.31). Theological discourse on kingship as put forward by 6th-century bishops not only included topics such as justice. From a reading of 6th-century sources it becomes clear that two other features must have been particularly important, namely heresy and incest. Heresy figures prominently already in the early books of Gregory's histories, notably in his description of Clovis' baptism and wars.[85] But it is also present in his description of King Chilperic's theological ambitions, in his relations with the Arian Visigoths and also, albeit from a somewhat different perspective, in his depiction of Queen Fredegund, Chilperic's wife as practising magical arts and using poison to wipe out political and dynastic rivals.[86] Also, the Merovingian kings' relation to the Jews appears as highly relevant to Gregory in theological terms, but this should not obscure the political background of measures taken against Jews in the 570 s and 580 s.[87]

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84 Margarete Weidemann, *Das Testament des Bischofs Berthramn von Le Mans vom 27. März 616. Untersuchungen zu Besitz und Geschichte einer fränkischen Familie im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert*, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Monographien 9 (Mainz, 1986). See also the case of Domnolus of Le Mans mentioned by Gregory in *Hist*. 6.9.

85 Heinzelmann, "Heresy in Book I and II."

86 Zeddies, *Religio et sacrilegium*, 242–246.

87 Michel Rouche, "Les baptêmes forcés de Juifs en Gaule mérovingienne et dans l'Empire d'Orient," in *De l'antijudaisme antique à l'antisémitisme contemporain*, (ed.) Valentin Nikiprowetzky (Lille, 1979), 105–124, arguing for the Merovingian kings adapting East Roman measures in their Jewish policy. This is a debated issue which I cannot deal with more closely within this article. See, e.g. the contributions by Bernard S. Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Minneapolis, 1977), 44–65; Brian Brennan, "The Conversion of the Jews of Clermont in AD 576," *Journal of Theological Studies* N.S. 36 (1985), 321–337; Walter Goffart, "The Conversions of Avitus of Clermont and Similar Passages in Gregory of Tours" (1985), in idem, *Rome's Fall and after* (London, 1989), 293–317

The deep concern of church councils with incestuous marriages had no precedent in 5th-century Gaul. There is no need, however, to interpret these decisions as directed against Germanic marriage practices in general; they should rather be seen as an attempt of the episcopate of largely Gallo-Roman stock to brand incest as sacrilege by tightening measures against it.[88] From the 530 s to the 560 s, Nicetius, metropolitan of Trier (†566 or 572?) and in his last years ecclesiastical advisor of king Sigibert I,[89] seems to have been a prominent proponent of a severe policy against incest, leading him into conflict with Merovingian kings such as Chlothar I, whose incestuous marriages were regarded as acts of licentiousness (*Hist.* 4.3), whereas in other cases such marriages may also have served to preserve dynastic power.[90] At a council held under king Charibert I in Paris, probably in 561 or 562, the bishops defined those relatives whose inter-marriage would have constituted incest.[91] Only shortly later, Bishop Germanus of Paris excommunicated Charibert for having several women at the same time, among them two sisters (*Hist.* 4.26). The extraordinarily long and learned provisions on incest given by a provincial council at Tours, which belonged to Charibert's kingdom at that time, in late 567, suggest just how important this topic must have been for Gregory, who was appointed bishop of Tours by Sigibert only six years later.[92] Gregory took pains to report Charibert's marriages and liaisons and emphasized Sigibert's deliberate departure from his brothers' habit of entering ignominious marriages on the occasion of the Austrasian king's marriage to Brunhild.[93] It is quite likely that Sigibert did so following the counsel of archbishop Nicetius of Trier, who had become his most important adviser in 561. At Tours, as already

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(Addendum on 317); Dietrich Claude, "Gregor von Tours und die Juden: Die Zwangsbekehrungen von Clermont," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 111 (1991), 37–147; E.M. Rose, "Gregory of Tours and the Conversion of the Jews in Clermont," in *World of Gregory of Tours*, 307–320.

88   I largely follow here the discussion by Ubl, *Inzestverbot und Gesetzgebung*, 137–175.

89   On Nicetius: *VP* 17.2; Kevin Uhalde, "Proof and Reproof: The Judicial Component of Episcopal Confrontation," *Early Medieval Europe* 8/1 (1999), 1–11; Hans A. Pohlsander, "A Call to Repentence. Bishop Nicetius of Trier to the Emperor Justinian," *Byzantion* 70 (2000), 457–473; Esders, "Avenger of all perjury."

90   Ubl, *Inzestverbot und Gesetzgebung*, 146–155; Dumezil, *Brunehaut*, 116–117.

91   MGH Conc. 1: 144, c. 4. On this council and its date, see Pontal, *Die Synoden*, 122–126.

92   MGH Conc. 1: 131–133, c. 22. See the detailed commentary by Mikat, *Die Inzestgesetzgebung*, 50–127. On the general background in Gregory's time to the topic of incest, see also Ian N. Wood, "Incest, Law and the Bible in Sixth-Century Gaul," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), 291–303.

93   See above, at n. 60.

at the Paris council mentioned previously, we find Eufronius of Tours, Germanus of Paris and Praetextatus of Rouen involved in creating provisions against incest, royal marriage orders,[94] and encroachments on church property by royal authorization.[95] A pastoral letter of this period under the name of the metropolitan Eufronius of Tours and three other bishops called on the people of the ecclesiastical province of Tours to return to God's commands under threat of an imminent disaster. The bishops specified the need for the postponement of marriages, mutual reconciliation, the dissolution of incestuous marriages, and the payment of tithes.[96] Biblically inspired as it is, the letter's reference to a disaster has convincingly been interpreted as the plague rather than *bella civilia*.[97]

The issue of incestuous marriages, especially committed by rulers, made the episcopate become more and more radical.[98] In 585, at the second council of Mâcon, which was attended by 65 bishops from most parts of Gaul, the bishops even went beyond the scope of Roman law by imposing severe ecclesiastical sanctions and by denouncing incestuous persons as "the most detestable pigs wallowing in the mud of their own excrement."[99] Though these measures were not taken exclusively against kings, they indicate that royal marriage behaviour was of crucial importance for Gregory's view of reason and causality in history and the present. The acts of the second council of Mâcon, held only one year after Chilperic's murder and shortly after the Gundovald revolt had

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94 On such marriage orders, which – following Roman tradition – could compensate for marriage *consensus*, see Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition*, 190–204.

95 MGH Conc. 1: 142–144, cc. 1, 4, 6; see above at n. 91. This concern may also explain why Chilperic was so irritated by Praetextatus celebrating an incestuous marriage between his son Merowech and Brunhild, against the provisions of canon law (*Hist.* 5.18).

96 MGH Conc. 1: 136–138.

97 Ubl, *Inzestverbot und Gesetzgebung*, 162–166. On the plague, which befell cities of Southern Gaul around 571, see *Hist.* 5.33–36, 39.

98 On the motif of incestuous marriage in 7th-century historiography see Stefan Esders, "Herakleios, Dagobert und die 'beschnittenen Völker': Die Umwälzungen des Mittelmeerraums im 7. Jahrhundert in der fränkischen Chronik des sog. Fredegar," in *Jenseits der Grenzen: Studien zur spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, (eds.) Andreas Goltz, Hartmut Leppin, and Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen, Millennium-Studien 25 (Berlin/New York, 2009), 239–311, at 296–298.

99 MGH Conc. 1: 171, c. 18. On Gallic bishops' knowledge of Roman law and their referring to it in the 6th century see Mark Vessey, "The Origins of the Collectio Sirmondiana: A New Look at the Evidence," in *The Theodosian Code. Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity*, (eds.) Jill Harries and Ian N. Wood (London, 1993), 178–199, and Detlef Liebs, *Römische Jurisprudenz in Gallien* (*2. bis 8. Jahrhundert*). Freiburger rechtsgeschichtliche Abhandlungen N. F. 38 (Berlin, 2002).

been quelled provide an extraordinary piece of evidence for the thinking of Merovingian bishops. The decisions taken indicate a radicalization of the episcopate's position on issues such as asylum,[100] the observance of Sunday,[101] the status of freedmen,[102] clerics' *privilegium fori*[103] and the ecclesiastical tithe.[104] Their self-image becomes highly visible in the bishops' adaptation of Roman *salutatio* procedure for clerics, whereby secular nobles had to dismount from their horses when they met a cleric on the street.[105] The council was presided over by king Guntram and no doubt contributed to the favourable features of the portrait of the king presented by Gregory.

At Mâcon the bishops also condemned, under threat of excommunication, certain persons with close connections to the royal court ("qui latere regis adhaerent") who were trampling underfoot both secular and ecclesiastical law by dragging poor people maliciously to court and expelling them from their lands and houses – sometimes by means of royal directives.[106] While the practices resemble activities known from the late Roman period, it is typical of the 6th-century situation for councils to confirm legal measures taken against offenses through use of excommunication as an ecclesiastical sanction.[107] In the fragmentary remains of Merovingian legislation from the 6th and early 7th centuries repeated reference is made to royal directives given in response to petitions which lawfully infringed the rights of subjects by assigning their lands to others, by claiming inheritance, or even by issuing royal marriage orders.[108] As the Roman emperors before them, the Merovingian kings issued rescripts and privileges in order to reward the service of persons and

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100 MGH Conc. 1: 168, c. 8.

101 MGH Conc. 1: 165–166, c. 1; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 185–190.

102 MGH Conc. 1: 167–168, c. 7; see Stefan Esders, *Die Formierung der Zensualität: Zur kirchlichen Transformation des spätrömischen Patronatswesens im früheren Mittelalter*, Vorträge und Forschungen. Sonderband 54 (Ostfildern, 2010), 47–49.

103 MGH Conc. 1: 168–169, c. 9; Anton Nissl, *Der Gerichtsstand des Clerus im fränkischen Reich* (Innsbruck, 1886); Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition*, 304–310.

104 MGH Conc. 1: 166–167, c. 5; Ernst Perels, *Die kirchlichen Zehnten im karolingischen Reiche* (Berlin, 1904), 14–17. Whereas the tithe had been demanded on a voluntary base at the council of Tours (567), at Mâcon the *fideles*, who would not give it, were threatened with excommunication.

105 MGH Conc. 1: 170–171, c. 15; see Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition*, 302–304.

106 MGH Conc. 1: 170, c. 14.

107 On this, see Sebastian Scholz, "Religiöse und soziale Ausgrenzung in den Kanones der merowingischen Konzilien (511–614)," in *Sterben über den Tod hinaus: Politische, soziale und religiöse Ausgrenzung in vormodernen Gesellschaften*, (eds.) Claudia Garnier and Johannes Schnocks (Würzburg, 2012), 147–163.

108 Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition*, 134–143, 169–175, 190–204, 207–219, 243–252.

institutions, who had been loyal to them or should be in the future.[109] Royal acts of this kind, however, might have had an impact on the sharing of public burdens on a local level, and in certain cases may have meant an infringement of local law. Written royal orders played a significant, though by no means uncontroversial role in the interaction between court and local societies, and this must have been even worse in periods of civil wars, when favours for supporters were needed and granted.[110]

It is evident that tensions between bishops and kings must have had a major material dimension, too. From the late 5th century onwards, church property had to be treated as inalienable, as is documented by various imperial laws, but also by church councils. While this had a profound impact on all kinds of transactions dealing with church property (ultimately fostering the practice of lending and exchanging church land and ecclesiastical dependents), it also opened up the question as to what extent kings could use ecclesiastical property and resources for 'their' political and military purposes, since large parts of ecclesiastical property ultimately derived from royal 'donation.'[111] The church councils had to deal with this time and again and often tend to represent the problem in a simplistic way.[112] Gregory's condemnation of king Chilperic for destroying wills drawn up to the advantage of the church,[113] and the insistence of church councils that anyone seeking unjustly to get hold of church property was a killer of the poor (*necator pauperum*) may obscure the fact that there were fairly complex possessory and social relations between churches on the one hand and families, aristocracies, and kings on the other.

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109   Alexander Callander Murray, "Immunity, Nobility, and the Edict of Paris," *Speculum* 69 (1994), 18–39; idem. "Merovingian Immunity Revisited," *History Compass* 8 (2010), 913–928.

110   Even in the famous Sichar feud and in other cases of violence Gregory had no reservation about mentioning that such people enjoyed special royal protection (*Hist.* 9.19).

111   Stefan Esders, "Die frühmittelalterliche 'Blüte' des Tauschgeschäfts: Folge ökonomischer Entwicklung oder Resultat rechtspolitischer Setzung?," in *Tauschgeschäft und Tauschurkunde vom 8. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert: L'acte d'échange, du VIIIᵉ au XIIᵉ siècle*, (eds.) Irmgard Fees and Philippe Depreux, Archiv für Diplomatik, Beiheft 13 (Cologne, Vienna, 2013), 19–44.

112   Pontal, *Die Synoden im Merowingerreich*, 250–252.

113   *Hist.* 6.46, and on the contrary, Guntram in *Hist.* 7.7. On the problem see also Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition*, 212–219, and for general background, Frederick S. Paxton, "Oblationes defunctorum: The Poor and the Dead in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West," in *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, (ed.) Kenneth Pennington (Vatican City, 2001), 245–268.

Complicating the relation between secular and ecclesiastical authority further was the role the churches had in carrying out important administrative functions with regard to taxation, jurisdiction and other matters of public interest, for which some were recompensed by grants of immunity.[114] Gregory's reports on tax exemption have to be interpreted in light of the administrative and social burdens borne by churches.[115] For churches that had not obtained immunity their freeborn dependants living on church property remained liable to military service. Given the evidence supplied by wills and conciliar decisions on freedmen, the number and range of ecclesiastical dependents must have increased extraordinarily during the 6th century. Manumission within the church, *manumissio in ecclesia*, once introduced by the emperor Constantine, was adapted to this situation when councils claimed that all former slaves who had been manumitted in a church should henceforth live under the protection of the church.[116]

12.3.3 *Cities, Kings and Bonds of Loyalty*

The relationship between king and the city was the fundamental political-administrative relationship in the 6th century. Even ducal commands (*ducatus*) were groupings of cities, and outside of Provence, often ad hoc in their configuration, though some were beginning to take on a fixed configuration. While the bishop was an ecclesiastical patron of his city (and certainly much more than that), his worldly counterpart, the *comes civitatis*, who had been imposed on the cities of Gaul since the late 5th century, was responsible for jurisdiction, taxation, and military recruitment, mixing military with civilian duties.[117] Within the cities we may observe in the *Histories* conflicts between bishops and counts, though Gregory's quarrels with Leudast may appear as an extreme example due to the special status of the *civitas* of Tours and its territory (*Hist.* 5.47–49). In Gregory's narrative the civil wars largely appear as wars over the possession of cities. This process was implicit in partible inheritance and exacerbated with further division, starting with the dividing up of Provence, and became more important, when in 561 southwestern parts of the Gaul became attached to Austrasia, situated in the northeast. At the division of Charibert's kingdom in 568 it was basically *civitates* and their territories which became portioned out between his brothers, and the treaty of Andelot clarified the

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114   Murray, "Immunity, Nobility, and the Edict of Paris."

115   See e.g. *Hist.* 9.30 with commentary by Jean Durliat, *Les finances publiques de Diocletian aux Carolingiens (284–889)*, Beihefte der Francia 21 (Sigmaringen, 1990), 310–314.

116   Esders, *Die Formierung der Zensualität*, 47–50.

117   See Murray, above, Ch. 6. 4b, 5.

possession of individual cities or even their parts. This process was also due to the fact that the attractiveness of cities for kings was based on the fiscal income their inhabitants produced.[118] This is reflected in the three-part division of individual cities such as Paris or Marseilles.

What is clear from the quarrels about possession of territories between the Merovingian kings is that the link between king and city was crucial to our understanding of how Gallic politics in the 6th century worked. Each city in the Merovingian kingdoms was basically an oath-bound community, the *civitas*, owing loyalty to its respective king.[119] Thus, as the final and decisive step in getting possession of a disputed city, we find royal officials urging the city's bishop and people to swear fidelity to the king.[120] It becomes clear from Gregory's *Histories* that taxation and military service were the most important legal consequences of this oath.[121] The Latin term Gregory most often used for exacting an oath (*sacramentum exigere*)[122] resembles similar phrases used in levying taxes and requisitioning public obligations. Since military service was one of these obligations, the oath of a *civitas* indicated that the city was considered part of an extended military administration, which was a typical feature of Merovingian government.[123] Thus not by chance does Gregory often depict (civil) war as the inhabitants of individual cities fighting one against the other.

As agents appointed by the king, bishops too had to swear an oath of fidelity to their ruler.[124] Of course, the military retinue, such as the *leudes*, and all kind of officials, ranging from *palatini* to bishops and counts, obligated themselves

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118　See Reinhold Kaiser, "Steuer und Zoll in der Merowingerzeit," *Francia* 7 (1979), 1–18.

119　David Gene Frye, *Gallia, Patria, Francia: Ethnic Tradition and Transformation in Gaul*, PhD thesis, Duke University 1991, 189–198.

120　Frye, ibid.; Bernard S. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization 481–751* (Minneapolis/ Ma., 1972), 22–23.

121　An interesting reflection of the dynastic development in the second half of the 6th century is that some cities were obliged to swear fidelity to a senior and a minor king such as in the case of Guntram and Chlothar II (*Hist.* 7.7); on Gundovald's practice of oath-swearing see above at n. 53.

122　E.g. *Hist.* 4.30; 6.31; 7.12.

123　See Alexander Callander Murray, "The Position of the *Grafio* in the Constitutional History of Merovingian Gaul," *Speculum* 61 (1986), 787–805; idem, "From Roman to Frankish Gaul: Centenarii and Centenae in the Administration of the Merovingian Kingdom," *Traditio* 44 (1988), 59–100. See also Stefan Esders, "Treueidleistung und Rechtsveränderung im frühen Mittelalter," in *Rechtsveränderung im politischen und sozialen Kontext mittelalterlicher Rechtsvielfalt*, (eds.) idem, Christine Reinle (Münster, 2005), 25–61.

124　Martin Heinzelmann, "Bischof und Herrschaft vom spätantiken Gallien zu den karolingischen Hausmeiern. Die institutionellen Grundlagen," in *Herrschaft und Kirche. Beiträge zur Entstehung und Wirkungsweise episkopaler und monastischer Organisationsformen*,

to their king by an oath of fidelity. The terms of the Treaty of Andelot and Chlothar's Edict of 614 show that shifting loyalties brought disturbances and quarrels to the kingdoms. An increased importance placed on oaths character-ized the nature of political fidelity, territorial fragmentation, and militariza-tion of Gallic society and politics in the 6th century. Though basically acts of loyalty,[125] such oaths were not simply a replacement of an institutional mode of governance by a personal one. In fact, as a vehicle of legal transfer, they served to transform an institutional mode by securing it with personal ties. This becomes most visible in the role played by 'infidelity' in the Merovingian political order. The crime of *infidelitas*, so prominent in Gregory's histories, was quite comparable to the late Roman *laesa maiestas*. But it was based on the oath, which transformed the concept of treason of late Roman public law into personal ties between the inhabitants of 6th-century Gaul and their ruler. As such these oaths transcended ethnic identities, be the persons obliged to swear Roman, Frank, Burgundian or whatever.[126] As is clear from a formulary preserved in the 7th century collection of Marculf, such ethnic identities were blurred by the fact that all people were obliged to swear fidelity to the king.[127]

The same formulary mentions the possibility that the king's envoys, who would take the oath on behalf of the king, could bring relics with them, on which the people could swear. The conjunction of oaths and the saints leads to a final observation about the way Gregory characterizes contemporary Gallic politics. A motif conveyed throughout Gregory's work is that the saints and their relics protected the cities of Gaul and that the bishop, appointed by God and ultimately accountable to him, acted on behalf of the saints.[128] Oaths, relics and saints were important instruments to Gregory for explaining the course of Gallic politics of his own time. When described from this perspective, the

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(ed.) Friedrich Prinz, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 33 (Stuttgart, 1988), 23–82, at 72–73.

125 Dietrich Claude, "The Oath of Allegiance and the Oath of the King in the Visigothic Kingdom," *Classical Folia* 30 (1976), 4–26.

126 Esders, "Treueidleistung und Rechtsveränderung im frühen Mittelalter"; idem, "Rechtliche Grundlagen frühmittelalterlicher Staatlichkeit: Der allgemeine Treueid," in *Der frühmit-telalterliche Staat – Europäische Perspektiven*, (eds.) Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 16 (Vienna, 2009), 423–432.

127 *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, (ed.) Karl Zeumer, MGH LL 5 (Hanover, 1886), 68; Alice Rio, trans., *The Formularies of Angers and Marculf: Two Merovingian Legal Handbooks*, TTH 46 (Liverpool, 2008), 175–176.

128 Peter Brown, "Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours" (1976), in idem, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982), 222–250.

history of the civil wars was also a tragic record of broken oaths.[129] The theological and indeed pastoral concern about oaths as we find it in hagiographic discourse of this period, and most vividly in the writings of the bishop of Tours, may also be interpreted as reflecting an historical consciousness highly attuned to its significance in society and politics of the day.[130]

The history of Gallic politics in the 6th century cannot be written without the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours. Gregory wrote as a man who was involved both as churchman and politician in the events he described. One can venture to say that he would not have written such a work had not Gallic politics of his own time revealed something that the bishop thought deserved to be handed over to future generations. But as theologian and church historian he also had to offer explanations that went far beyond commemoration and censure. It is perhaps this tension inherent in his work which makes the *Histories* such a unique text for reconstructing the history and political thought of a distempered period.[131]

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129 Esders, "Avenger of all perjury."

130 Kevin Uhalde, *Expectations of Justice in the Age of Augustine* (Philadelphia, 2007), 77–104.

131 I should like to express my deep gratitude to the editor, Alexander Callander Murray, for improving the English text of this contribution and for making many helpful comments and suggestions on its contents.

Gregory of Tours, Italy, and the Empire

S.T. Loseby

13.1 Gregory's Horizons

As everybody now agrees, Gregory of Tours did not write a *History of the Franks*, but *Histories*, and his fundamental purpose in doing so, no less than in his hagiographical writings, was to convey moral lessons.[1] Even so, he concentrated overwhelmingly on Gaul, partly because that was what he knew most about, but principally because it was more immediately relevant to him and his audience. Once Gregory's historical narrative strikes out from its introductory framework derived from the Bible and from earlier chroniclers it therefore narrows down, venturing across to Italy and the eastern empire as a setting for action on little more than a dozen occasions.[2] When it does so, moreover, it is for reasons of domestic interest. As we shall see, Italy features predominantly in the context of Frankish invasions, while the episodes set in the empire revolve around the person of Tiberius II; the moralising purpose of the exceptions to these recurring themes – a lurid tale of the murderous sacrament of

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1 Beyond this, of course, there is less consensus about Gregory's methods and motives. Among recent interpretations, see especially Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton, 1988), ch. 3; Adriaan H.B. Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul: The Histories of Gregory of Tours Interpreted in their Historical Context* (Göttingen, 1994); Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge, 2001); Ian Wood, *Gregory of Tours* (Bangor, 1994) – all of which inform what follows, as, for the composition of the *Histories,* does Alexander Callander Murray, "Chronology and the Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), 157–196 (cf. ch. 3, above).

2 Italy: *Hist.* 3.31, 3.32, 4.41, 6.42, 8.18, 9.25, 10.1, 10.3. Empire: *Hist.* 4.40, 5.19, 5.30, 6.30, 10.24. Cf. Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 207–208.

the Arian Goths, an eye-witness report of Pope Gregory's consecration in Rome, and the news of the destruction of half of Antioch – is merely more transparent.[3]

Gregory's hagiographical horizons are somewhat broader, notably in the *Glory of the Martyrs*, where the majority of those commemorated come from outside Gaul, and their edifying achievements are partially ordered within a geographical framework.[4] Even so, Gregory implies at one point that he considered the martyrs of Gaul to be the main subject of this work, and takes pains to justify its wider vision by stating that he could not keep silent about events in the East that corroborate the Catholic faith.[5] As in the *Histories*, however, his inclusion of such extra-Gallic material was shaped not only by its general didactic interest, or by the availability of information, but by considerations of immediate relevance. Biblical figures and martyrs who were distant in time and space might feature because of their renown, but the demonstration of their *virtus* often cuts away from their native *loca sancta* to emphasize the efficacy of their relics in Gaul in the here and now, which in several cases had been orchestrated by Gregory himself. During his episcopate he had purposefully accumulated the relics of a number of Italian and eastern saints and deposited them in the holy shrines of the Touraine; not coincidentally, they feature prominently among the martyrs whose glory he celebrated.[6] Not far away in Poitiers, Radegund's community had assembled a similar collection, enshrined in a silver reliquary together with one special treasure, a relic of the Holy Cross. But Gregory had his own, the silk robe in which the Cross had been wrapped at Jerusalem. Theirs had been acquired by courtesy of the imperial court and installed amid much pomp and circumstance; Gregory's came to him

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3 Hist. 3.31, 10.1, 10.24.

4 The concerns of *GM* 1–22 are with sites, relics and miracles associated with Christ, Mary, or John the Baptist, whether in the Holy Land or elsewhere, while *GM* 26–34 are similarly devoted to other biblical figures. The sequencing thereafter is broadly geographical, in that it includes Roman (35–41), Italian (42–46), and African/eastern sections (93–102), although, as so often with Gregory, a different, and more associative logic intermittently supervenes.

5 *GM* 103; *GM* 9. In the former, at the end of a chapter on Felix of Nola, Gregory observes "let us return to the martyrs of the Gauls."

6 Gregory mentions some of these depositions in *Hist.* 10.31, but considers it otiose to catalogue his dedicatory activity in full. His acquisitions of relics from overseas are also mentioned in *GM* 82, and Fortunatus, *Carm.* 10.5, 10.10; they include the eastern martyrs Cosmas and Damian (*GM* 97), John the Baptist (*GM* 14), and Sergius (*GM* 96), the Roman martyrs Paul (*GM* 28), Lawrence (*GM* 41, 45), Pancras (*GM* 38), and Chrysanthus and Daria (*GM* 37), and the Milanese martyr Victor (*GM* 44). For Gregory's relics more generally, see Luce Pietri, *La ville de Tours du* IVe au VIe siècle (Rome, 1983), 497–507.

serendipitously from a man who turned up in Tours with it one day, asserting that it had been entrusted to him by a favourite abbot of the Empress Sophia. Reacting with self-confessed *rusticitas* to this outrageous claim, Gregory tested its healing powers empirically. It worked, in spades.[7]

Whatever we make of his mystery visitor, it is clear that there was regular contact between Gaul, Italy, and the eastern Mediterranean in Gregory's day, as envoys, merchants and pilgrims travelled to and fro between them, conducting negotiations, shipping oil and slaves, distributing relics, and, of course, swapping stories. To give but one example, down in the deep south of Francia, the cosmopolitan port of Marseilles was still so thoroughly tied into the Mediterranean world for its mint to be striking an enigmatic gold coinage in the names of a succession of emperors that mirrored contemporary imperial issues in everything but its weight, which conformed to the lower Frankish standard.[8] Tours lay at some remove from the main axes of this interregional traffic – though it was on the main road to Spain – but it was a pilgrim destination, and Gregory himself was regularly on the move. Although he never ventured outside Gaul, nor even as far as the Mediterranean, he had ample opportunity to meet those who had done so, perhaps particularly on his regular appearances at the royal courts, and his intellectual curiosity can scarcely be doubted. It is not hard to imagine that his first question to any promising interlocutor would have been to ask them what they knew about Saint Martin, followed up by a more general enquiry after edifying material. He ended up with more leads than he could pursue, and more stories than he had the inclination or the space to include.[9]

In sifting through and selecting from this accumulation of data, Gregory applied the same hierarchy of authentication to Italian and eastern material as he did to information from closer to home. In principle, he preferred to rely upon textual authorities, but his ability to do so was circumscribed by considerations of availability and, for eastern material, language.[10] In practice,

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7   *GM* 5: the man gave Gregory other relics besides. This one is probably the subject of Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* 2.3, (ed.) and trans. Marc Reydellet, *Venance Fortunat: Poèmes*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1994–2004). Holy Cross: Isabel Moreira, "*Provisatrix Optima*: St. Radegund of Poitiers' Relic Petitions to the East," *Journal of Medieval History* 19 (1993), 285–305. *Rusticitas*: Peter Brown, *Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours*, Stenton Lecture 1976 (Reading, 1977).

8   S.T. Loseby, "Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, I: Gregory of Tours, the Merovingian Kings and 'un Grand Port'," in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand,* (eds.) Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden, 1998), 203–229.

9   E.g. *GM* 28, 97, 100.

10   For this preference, see e.g. *GM* 39, 43, 63, *GC* 108. For Gregory's sources in general, see Godefroid Kurth, *Études Franques*, 2 vols (Paris, 1919), 2: 130–172, Massimo Oldoni,

therefore, while he drew extensively on the works of earlier chroniclers for the more distant past and had access to Italian and eastern hagiographical material and probably to descriptions of the Holy Land, much of his more contemporary information about Italy and the empire will have reached him by word of mouth, from *opinio* rather than *lectio*.[11] Gregory attributes several of his stories of Italy and the East to eye-witnesses, including his friend and protégé Fortunatus, who had grown up in Ravenna, his own deacon Agiulf, whom he had sent to collect relics in Rome, and the deacon Johannes, who had been to the Holy Land, and likewise called at Rome on his way back; it is tempting to identify the latter with another of Gregory's deacons, who once joined four others in peering into a well at Bethlehem in the hope of seeing the star that had once guided the Magi, and now appeared there to the pure in heart.[12] Among other unnamed informants, he also acknowledges a certain Theodore, who had visited the tomb of the apostle Thomas in Edessa, a bishop from overseas called Symon, who brought him news of a Persian invasion of Armenia and the overthrow of Antioch, and another Johannes, a Syrian who had helped him to translate the story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus into Latin.[13]

This catalogue of named witnesses to distant events is indicative of both the potential availability of information and Gregory's receptiveness to it, but it is far from exhaustive. In part, this is because Gregory's recognition of his sources, even in his hagiographical works, is scrupulous but not altogether systematic. He does, nevertheless, take much more care to authenticate stories of explicit Christian instruction than he does his historical reportage, where he frequently shows no comparable concern to validate his knowledge of events that he cannot have personally witnessed, whether they took place in Francia or beyond. It is characteristic, for example, that in the chapters within the *Histories* concerned with Italian and eastern material he identifies his sources for Pope Gregory's measures against plague, or the disaster that struck Antioch, but not

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"Gregorio di Tours e i 'Libri historiarum.' Le fonti scritte," in *Gregorio di Tours* (Todi, 1977), 253–324.

11   For the two categories of information, see *GC* 34, where Gregory laments their absence. For his use of earlier chroniclers, see below. For Gregory's access to writings about Italian and eastern saints, see e.g. *GM* 28, 31, 34, 35, 37, 41, 46, 94, 103; *GC* 4, 26; *PS explicit*; *MA*, pf. and 36. His potential access to written descriptions of the Holy Land is judiciously assessed by Patrick Gautier Dalche, "La réprésentation de l'espace dans les *Libri Miraculorum* de Grégoire de Tours," *Le Moyen Age* 88 (1982), 397–420.

12   Fortunatus: *VSM* 1.13–16; *GM* 41. Agiulf: *Hist.* 10.1, *VP* 8.6, and probably as *vir fidelis* in *GM* 82. Johannes: *GM* 87, probably *GM* 1, and perhaps *GM* 18. Two of the five saw the star.

13   *GM* 31 (Theodore); *Hist.* 10.24, probably *GM* 95, and part of *Hist.* 4.40 (Symon); *GM* 94, *PSD explicit* (Johannes).

for the succession of Frankish campaigns in Italy or the character of the Emperor Tiberius. Although some of the latter reports could just conceivably have reached him from the same informants, they are almost without exception from clerical and religious backgrounds, and Gregory moved in other circles too. While he never cites them directly among his sources, Gregory undoubtedly had sundry encounters on his travels with magnates, merchants, medics, and soldiers who also had knowledge, first-hand or otherwise, of peninsular and eastern affairs, and in some cases were capable of putting it to good use; Reovalis, a doctor in the Holy Cross nunnery, shows an eye-watering confidence in his ability to perform testicular surgery on the basis of an operation he had once seen performed in Constantinople.[14] Finally, and probably most significantly, as a trusted courtier Gregory was personally involved in discussions with at least three kings that touched on relations with the empire, which, as we shall see, were a recurrent focus of contemporary diplomatic activity.[15]

The potential for Gregory to have known a great deal about current Italian and eastern affairs is reflected in his writings, in that when he does include them, he treats them in much the same way as in his domestic reporting. Alongside the occasional errors and confusions, these chapters exhibit Gregory's familiar eye for those incidental details that engage the reader's attention, partly in a nod to old-school erudition, but primarily to lend colour and verisimilitude to his narratives.[16] So we hear the crack of the whips that kept people away from the Cross at Jerusalem and the clang of the kidney stone passed by Mummolus into a bucket at Patras, learn of the distinctiveness of mastic seeds from the island of Chios, and are invited to marvel with Gregory at the wool-bearing fruits of the Holy Land.[17] But amid the similar grace-notes that embellish

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14   *Hist.* 10.15. See also Baudonivia, *Vita Radegundis* 2.14, (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 2 (Hanover, 1888). These potential informants are deftly categorized and discussed in Michel-Yves Perrin, "Grégoire de Tours et l'espace extra-Gaulois: le gallocentrisme grégorien revisité," in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois*, (eds.) Nancy Gauthier and Henri Galinié (Tours, 1997), 35–45.

15   In *Hist.* 9.20, Gregory and Felix are sent by Childebert to discuss matters arising, including the Italian question, with Guntram; they will have been fully briefed. In *Hist.* 6.2, when Chilperic displays his gifts from Tiberius to Gregory and the assembled company, the topic of relations with the empire can hardly have been avoided.

16   Among incidental confusions, Gregory inexplicably places Antioch in Egypt (*Hist.* 4.40), and postdates both Justin's and Tiberius' deaths by a year, perhaps in consequence of a time-lag in information reaching the west (*Hist.* 5.30, 6.30).

17   GM 5, GM 30, GM 101, GM 17. Chios mastic is indeed unique, and now has protected status.

his reports from Constantinople, such as the number of elephants paraded before the Emperor Tiberius after his victory over the Persians, Gregory also exhibits a confident general grasp on events; he offers the first, rather nonchalant western reference to the festival of Mary's assumption, shows a circumstantial awareness of imperial ceremonial and customs, and provides a unique and broadly plausible account of the plotting that attended Tiberius' accession.[18] The quality of his raw material here is clearly superior to idle gossip, and has been shown to have much in common with contemporary Byzantine depictions of Tiberius and his predecessor Justin. Even so, it still seems unnecessary to imagine that Gregory owed the unexpected depth of his information about the imperial court to written sources whose attitudes he often appears to share, but is unlikely to have seen, and could not easily have read.[19] Instead, he is more likely to have absorbed it from a range of possible informants, among whom the envoys shuttling between the imperial and Frankish courts are merely the most obvious possibilities.

The light that Gregory is capable of shedding on the imperial court in the reign of Tiberius does not spill over into his accounts of his successor Maurice, who, as we shall see, is treated in an altogether terser and more cautious fashion. It would be hazardous, however, to assume that this change of approach is dictated simply by the quality of available information, particularly at a time when contact between the emperor and Gregory's king, Childebert, was running at exceptional levels, and the bishop was privy to the royal counsel. Gregory was certainly well-acquainted with these diplomatic exchanges, but the only ones he reports in any detail are Gripo's mission of 590 and its aftermath. Similarly, whereas four of Gregory's accounts of Childebert's campaigns in Italy against the Lombards laconically summarize supposedly sweeping

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18   Elephants: *Hist.* 5.30; John of Biclar, *Chronicon* 35, counts four more than Gregory. Mary: *GM* 4, with Averil Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: a City Finds its Symbol," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 29 (1978), 90–94. Detailed knowledge: *Hist.* 5.30, 6.30, including the formalities of accession, references to *factionarii*, and to Tiberius enjoying the wine-harvest at a villa for a month, "iuxta ritum imperiale." For Tiberius, see below.

19   Gossip: Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare* (Oxford, 1988), 7–8, 126, and 268 n. 34. Similarities suggestive of possible access to written sources: Averil Cameron, "Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*: Two Case Histories," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 3 (1977), 1–17, and, more specifically, eadem, "The Byzantine Sources of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 26 (1975), 421–426. It should be noted, however, that Gregory's use of the adjective *aelimosinarius*, cited in support of this argument, is not peculiar to these chapters: cf. *Hist.* 1.44, 3.7, 3.18, etc., with Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 179–180.

Frankish victories and unprecedented defeats with twitter-like concision, the inglorious progress of the fifth plays out in lavish technicolour detail. It seems implausible to imagine that Gregory was intimately informed about a handful of these episodes and ignorant of all but the bare outline of others, particularly when similar variations in the depth and precision of his reporting can be found throughout his depictions of contemporary events much closer to home.[20] The analysis that follows will therefore proceed from the assumption that Gregory's reporting of Italian and eastern affairs is highly selective, indeed perhaps particularly so, given their marginal importance within his narrative as a whole, and that his emphasis on a few emblematic episodes is designed for particular purposes.

The corollary of the assumption that Gregory knew more about Italy and the East than he found it useful or relevant to include is that he neglects some prominent individuals and themes for reasons of choice rather than necessity. Any estimate of the balance of ignorance and wilful exclusion in determining Gregory's emphases and omissions is necessarily problematic, since it depends by definition upon arguments from silence, and varies over time. His cursory treatment of two colossi from earlier generations, Theoderic the Ostrogoth and the Emperor Justinian, is certainly shaped in part by ignorance and confusion, but Gregory says enough to indicate that it is also a conscious decision, as we shall see. It is perhaps more surprising that he shows no interest in the abiding international theological controversy of his day over the status of the Three Chapters, which exercized the Gallic church considerably around the middle of the 6th century, and remained a threat to Christian unity, particularly in Italy, throughout his lifetime.[21] But while his friend Fortunatus, for example, was capable of tiptoeing round current theological controversies carefully enough to demonstrate considered understanding, even while simultaneously preserving the ambiguity of his own position, for Gregory the empire's doctrinal stance was not a matter of immediate concern, because it had no direct bearing on the Gauls and, more to the point, it complicated his reservation of the theme of contemporary heresy for the Arian Goths.[22] The

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20   For Gregory's selectivity, see Goffart, *Narrators*, 159–168.

21   See Ian Wood, "The Franks and Papal Theology, 550–660," in *The Crisis of the* Oikoumene: *the Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean*, (eds.) Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubitt (Turnhout, 2007), 223–241, and other papers in the same volume.

22   Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm. App.* 2. The evidence is too allusive, however, to sustain attempts to make the poet either a partisan of the Italian schismatics or an agent of imperial cultural diplomacy, as shown for example by Brian Brennan, "Venantius Fortunatus: Byzantine Agent?" *Byzantion* 65 (1995), 7–16.

preoccupations of the papacy with the same problem were similarly unlikely to commend it to Gregory's attention. While he can hardly have been ignorant of papal communications with the Gallic church on this and other issues, or of the claims to authority that lay behind them, his interest in the bishops of Rome is at best sporadic, and he treats them with no particular reverence; the actions of individual popes could be celebrated, in past and present, and Gregory was prepared to acknowledge their apostolic credentials – though his Martin was blessed with those too – their part in establishing the Gallic church, and, very occasionally, their role as a court of higher appeal for its bishops.[23] But Gregory had no room whatsoever for the royally-backed pretensions of the bishops of Arles to a privileged position within the Gallic church on the basis of an authority delegated from Rome; he prefers to regard the episcopate as a corporate body, and exhibits remarkably little recognition of episcopal hierarchy either within or beyond the Gallic church.[24]

Gregory's equivalent understanding of episcopal power applied all the more to the eternal qualities of the saints. Their *virtus* transcended both time and space, and it could not meaningfully be differentiated, so naturally it manifested itself in reassuringly familiar ways, from the Bible to the present, and from the Holy Land to Tours, abetted by the movement of relics in both directions.[25] In this regard alone, Gregory's horizons were boundless; he saw Martin as a "special patron for the entire world," and his enthusiasm for the universal and collective power of the saints overrode his tendency to bind communities to local and specific patrons.[26] This rationalisation was not without its tensions, even so. Gregory might marvel at Martin's ability to work wonders in regions he never visited, or celebrate him leaving Gaul to perform a miracle in Ravenna, but in Tours at Christmas 575, in the precarious aftermath of Sigibert's death, a possessed man could cause consternation by claiming that Martin had

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23   See Thomas F.X. Noble, "Gregory of Tours and the Roman Church," in *The World of Gregory of Tours,* (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden, 2002), 145–161, against which the objections of Alberto Ferreiro, "'Petrine Primacy' and Gregory of Tours," *Francia* 33 (2006), 1–16, are not compelling. Martin as apostle: *VM* 1.1, via Severus. Cf. Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 169–170.

24   Georg Langgärtner, *Die Gallienpolitik der Päpste im 5. und 6 Jahrhundert. Eine Studie über den apostilischen Vikariat von Arles* (Bonn, 1964). Gregory's exceptional nod to the patriarchal claims of the bishops of Lyons in *Hist.* 5.20 is perhaps provoked by subsequent papal intervention in the case.

25   This lack of differentiation underpins *VP* praef., for example, but is most explicitly expressed in *VM* 4.12. Gregory takes pains to note the efficacy of western relics in the East in *GM* 77 and *VJ* 33.

26   *VM* 4. prol. For assertions of the global reach of Martin's cult, cf. *VM* 3.21, 3.35, 3.38.

abandoned the sinful city for Rome; even Gregory was smitten with fear, but a miracle soon proved the saint's omnipresence.[27] Martin, of course, was special, but for Gregory all the saints played as a team, regardless of their origin, and, as we have seen, he went in active pursuit of overseas signings who might strengthen his squad. He installed relics of the Cilician martyrs Cosmas and Damian in Martin's cell at Tours, for example, while in the oratory he built nearby at Artanne, they joined memorials of the angel Gabriel, Christ's tombstone, Victor of Milan, Julian, Martin, and Nicetius of Lyon.[28] In this eclectic enshrining of the local, personal, and remote within the universal, the categories of Italy and the empire have no meaning. But while Gregory's conception of holy power knew no barriers, his political understanding rejected any imperial claims to universalism or even superiority. Just how consciously and comprehensively he did so will emerge if we look in more detail first at his demonstrably selective use of earlier sources in discussing the empire in the past, and then at his portrayal of contemporary emperors and their attempts to embroil the Franks in their Italian campaigns.

13.2   The Glory that was Rome

When Gregory turned up for a meeting at Chilperic's villa at Nogent in 581, he was treated to a display of the gold coins that the Emperor Tiberius had recently sent to the king, which bore the imperial bust and an inscription celebrating his eternal rule on the obverse, and on the reverse a racing chariot surrounded by the legend *gloria romanorum*, "the glory of the Romans."[29] Chilperic, his head characteristically abuzz with schemes that would reflect similar honour upon the Franks, was clearly delighted with his gifts. Quite what Gregory made of them is more difficult to tell, although his singling out of these *aurei* among the many other treasures shown off by the king suggests he viewed them with particular interest. His perception of Tiberius as a model ruler, and his deliberate deployment of him in counterpoint to Chilperic cannot be doubted, and this will be considered further in due course. But his idealisation of this individual emperor was strictly personal. Gregory had no great regard for emperors in general, and he did not identify with the empire in past, present, or

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27   *VM* 2.36, 1.16, 2.25.

28   *Hist.* 10.31; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* 10.5, 10.10. *VP* 8.6 likewise emphasizes the equivalence of Agiulf's relic acquisitions, whether brought from afar, or collected from Lyons on the way home.

29   *Hist.* 6.2.

perpetuity. While the Byzantines might think of themselves as Romans, a perspective similarly assumed by many of Gregory's western contemporaries, the bishop of Tours declined in his writings to adopt their self-representation as heirs to the glory that was Rome. Instead, he consistently defined their power in terms such as *imperium*, *res publica*, or *provinciae imperatoris*, which are left to float free of any ethnic connotations. On the very rare occasions when the bishop of Tours deviates from this practice, all of which relate, eccentrically, to the imperial presence in Spain, he describes them as Greeks.[30]

For Gregory, the power of the Romans belonged as firmly to the past as that of the Assyrians, Egyptians, or Sicyonians.[31] If the Roman empire featured far more prominently in his early books than any of its predecessors, this was not because it was intrinsically of greater interest.[32] Instead, it was simply sketched in to provide a minimal, and in itself barely comprehensible chronological backdrop for the exposition of Christian and, in particular, Gallic Christian history; the reign of Augustus, for example, was noteworthy for the foundation of Lyons, future cradle of martyrs, and the birth of Christ, in that order.[33] Even as he professedly followed the examples set by Eusebius (as accessed through Rufinus), Jerome, Orosius, and Severus, Gregory was ruthlessly cutting and pasting them into his own carefully-conceived framework.[34] Pagan emperors are occasionally admitted into this breakneck narrative purely to give some sense of the *series temporum*, but their actions are all but confined to the persecution of Christians, which results in an accumulation of martyrs sampled somewhat randomly by Gregory from a combination of his textual sources, and, to some degree, local knowledge.[35]

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30 *Graeci* or *Greci*: *Hist.* 5.38, 6.40, 6.43, all in the context of Hermenegild's revolt; one might wonder if this reflects the language of his source, but it may equally be because, again in the Spanish context, Gregory has various Goths employ Roman as a synonym for Catholic: GM 24, 78, 79.

31 *Hist.* 1.17, a tokenistic summary derived somewhat confusedly from Jerome's *Chronicle*, but carefully eschewing any notions of successive empires.

32 Kathleen Mitchell, "Marking the Bounds: the Distant Past in Gregory's History," in *World of Gregory of Tours*, 295–306.

33 *Hist.* 1.18–19.

34 Gregory stresses his *exsemplaria* (*sic*) in both *Hist.* 1 prol. and 2 prol. The scale of his direct borrowings, particularly in the latter part of Book 1, is most easily apprehended from the MGH edition of the *Histories*, but for the imposition of his own theological perspective see especially Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 127–132, 146–147.

35 Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Antoninus, Decius, Valerian and Gallienus, and Diocletian in turn appear in this guise: *Hist.* 1.25–30, 32–33, 35. The only other active emperors are Vespasian and Hadrian, who are of interest because they respectively destroy the Temple in

This repeated association of the empire with persecution necessarily ends with Diocletian, but the first Christian emperors are still treated with caution. Even Constantine's pivotal adoption of Christianity is presented indirectly and without celebration, as Gregory pares it down to the restoration of peace to the churches after the final outbreak of persecution, the appending of the positive adverb *feliciter* to Jerome's report of his thirty-year reign, and the inclusion from the same source of the emperor's commissioning of a metrical version of the Gospels. But Constantine himself is portrayed as the killer of his wife and son, and the true highlights of his reign, as signalled by the chapter's title, are those of most immediate interest to Gregory: the birth of Martin and the discovery of the True Cross.[36] The conspicuous omission here that explains Gregory's lack of enthusiasm for Constantine is Jerome's condemnation of the emperor as an Arian, a taint that was likewise associated with several of his successors by Gregory's sources.[37] This presented Gregory with a problem, since he was determined to delay the introduction of Arianism into his narrative until the arrival of the Vandals and Goths in Book 2.[38] In pursuing his pointillist approach to imperial history, he therefore excised any direct reference to it. The exile of Hilary of Poitiers at the behest of unspecified *heretici* is duly

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Jerusalem and rebuild the city: *Hist.* 1.26, 28. For random sampling, see *Hist.* 1.35, where Gregory illustrates the Diocletianic persecution, subsequently used as a benchmark for misery in the churches (*Hist.* 4.47), with the obscure example of Quirinus of Siscia, taken from a combination of Jerome and Prudentius.

36   *Hist.* 1.36, heading: "de nativitate sancti Martini et crucis inventione." For the significance of the chapter-headings, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 117–119. Gregory's core source for this chapter is Jerome, *Chronicon* 2341, 2344, (ed.) Rudolf Helm, *Eusebius Werke 7: Die Chronik des Hieronymus*, Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller 47, 3rd ed. (Berlin, 1984), which mentions both murders in separate entries, but attributes only that of Fausta explicitly to the emperor. Orosius, *Historia* 7.26, (ed.) and trans. Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, *Orose: Histoires* (*contre les païens*) (Paris, 1990–1991), suppresses the latter, but assigns the death of Crispus directly to Constantine. But neither includes the manner of their deaths, which Gregory probably derived from Sidonius, *Ep.* 5.8, (ed.) and trans. André Loyen, *Sidoine Apollinaire: Oeuvres*, *Correspondance*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 2003) 2 vols; the idea of a conspiracy between Fausta and Crispus is very much Gregory's own.

37   Jerome, *Chronicon* 2353. For Gregory's (mis)understanding of Constantine, see Ian N. Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 63 (1985), 251, and, in a wider context, Eugen Ewig, "Das Bild Constantins des Grossen in den ersten Jahrhunderten des abendländischen Mittelalters," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 75 (1955), 1–46.

38   Martin Heinzelmann, "Heresy in Books I and II of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae*," in *After Rome's Fall. Narrators and Sources of Medieval History: Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, (ed.) Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto, 1998), 67–82.

acknowledged, but Constantius' role is restricted to his recall.[39] Similarly, while Gregory derives his observation on the influence of Bishop Maximus of Trier directly from Jerome's *Chronicle*, he strips it of the context, Maximus' reception of Athanasius after his exile by Constantius, through which it had originally been illustrated.[40] Finally, in dedicating a chapter to the ignominious death of Valens at the hands of the Goths, Gregory attributes it to divine vengeance for his forcing of monks to do military service, a sin with some contemporary resonance, but not for the heretical beliefs that had also been vividly denounced by his sources.[41] This is balanced immediately by praise of Theodosius, the one Roman emperor who is described, as Tiberius II will be, as putting his trust in God. But while Gregory stresses his reliance on prayers and vigils rather than the sword, his excellence is illustrated exclusively by his political achievements, and most specifically his divinely-backed victory over the tyrant Maximus. Theodosius' part in the making of Catholic orthodoxy, by contrast, is passed over in silence, because this had never been allowed to come explicitly under threat within the foregoing narrative of imperial Christianity.[42] Just as Valens was bad, but could not be overtly Arian, so Theodosius was God-fearing without being decisively Catholic. In subordinating the Christian Roman emperors to his wider narrative strategies, Gregory highlights their relative insignificance within his purposes.

With the preface to his second book, Gregory effectively bids farewell to the sources that had hitherto provided an imperial chronological framework for his writing, and shows little capacity or inclination for replacing it with one of his own devising.[43] His presentation of the disintegration of imperial authority

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39   *Hist.* 1.38, closely following Jerome, *Chronicon* 2372, 2375. *Hist.* 3. prol. links Hilary's exile more explicitly to the struggle against Arianism.

40   *Hist.* 1.37; Jerome, *Chronicon* 2359.

41   *Hist.* 1.41, isolating this element of Valens' sins from Jerome, *Chronicon* 2391 and Orosius, *Historia* 7.33.1, and omitting the rest. Orosius, *Historia* 7.33.18–19, is particularly explicit in blaming Valens for Gothic Arianism; they burnt him alive by divine judgement, since it is through him that they will ultimately find themselves burning in hell. Such a correlation would normally have appealed to Gregory, but did not suit his purposes in the slightest here. For Gregory's opposition to the contemporary compulsion of those in the service of the church into military service, see *Hist.* 5.26, 7.42.

42   *Hist.* 1.42–43, interspersing elements of Orosius, *Historia* 7.34–35 almost verbatim with material drawn from Sulpicius Severus. Cf. *Hist.* 5.30 for Tiberius II, "qui in Deo spem posuerat" and see below. The advertised subject of *Hist.* 1.43 is Maximus *tyrannus*, but although Gregory's sources told him of the religious controversies of his reign, he again sidesteps them here; he does allude darkly to them in *Hist.* 5.18, and perhaps *VJ* 4.

43   Cf. Gregory's catalogue of the bishops of Tours in *Hist.* 10.31, where their consecrations are dated by imperial reigns as far as that of Brictius in 397, and then associated (more imprecisely) with rulers only from Clovis onwards.

in the west is fragmentary, disordered, and incoherent, and the emperors them-selves take no great part in it. The Vandals invade Gaul and then Spain, dragging along in their wake the Suebi (who for Gregory are synonymous with the Alemanni), until the two *populi* fall out and the Vandals move on to Africa; Gregory makes them responsible for the lasting imposition of Arianism on Spain before they leave, but he is far more concerned to expand upon Huneric's perse-cution of African Catholics, for which he had good sources at his disposal.[44] After that, it takes him just three terse sentences to bring the Vandal kingdom to a summary end at the hands of the *res publica*. This potted history of the Vandals is riddled with oddities, errors, and omissions, but it does incidentally furnish a broad outline of political developments in Africa that is missing, for example, for Spain or Italy.[45] Instead, after going briskly back in time to tag the Goths under Athanaric as another bunch of heretical persecutors, Gregory offers no similar narrative of their subsequent progress, but turns his attention firmly to events in Gaul, which remains the focus of his attention for the rest of the book.[46]

His starting-point is the invasion of Gaul by the Huns, which is successfully repelled by Aetius with the backing of Goths, Franks, and, most importantly, the prayers of Bishop Anianus.[47] Aetius is identified here as patrician and employed, reasonably enough, as the epitome of imperial power; Gregory found him sufficiently interesting to devote a chapter to what the *historiograffi* wrote about him, which he derived primarily from a lost history of Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, quoted *in extenso*. Even so, its praise of his personal and martial qualities is undercut by Gregory's conscious inclusion of passages that make it clear how Aetius had previously backed the usurper John, dismissed by Gregory as a tyrant, and had schemed with the Huns to encourage them to invade Italy; it is not altogether clear whether Gregory knew that this episode preceded by a generation the devastation of Italy by Attila's Huns that had been summarily described at the conclusion of the previous chapter.[48] His account moves on

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44   *Hist.* 2.2–3; cf. *GM* 57. Andrew Cain, "Miracles, Martyrs, and Arians: Gregory of Tours' Sources for his Account of the Vandal Kingdom," *Vigiliae Christianae* 59 (2005), 412–437.

45   Cf. Goffart, *Narrators*, 168: "coherent narration (beyond single chapters) is something [Gregory] seems occasionally to lapse into."

46   *Hist.* 2.4, which ends in one of the *recursus*-formulae with which Gregory sometimes appears to call himself to order.

47   *Hist.* 2.5–7. Michel Banniard, "L'aménagement de l'histoire chez Grégoire de Tours: à pro-pos de l'invasion de 451 (H.L. II. 5–7)," *Romanobarbarica* 3 (1978), 5–38.

48   *Hist* 2.8, heading: "Quid de Aetio historiographii scripserint." Had Gregory simply wanted to stress Aetius' qualities, he could have cropped his quotation from Frigeridus to omit his ties to John and the Huns as, for example does Bernard S. Bachrach, "Gregory of Tours as

from Frigeridus to explain that when Valentinian III killed Aetius, the only action assigned by Gregory to a fifth-century western emperor, he did so without due process, fearing Aetius was intending to usurp him "per tyrannidem," only to be assassinated in his turn.[49] This is one of Gregory's trademark collisions of bad with worse, since he has already made it abundantly clear that Aetius, whatever his merits, was scarcely a man to be trusted.[50] The deaths of the pair serve not only to epitomize how Rome was undermined by internal divisions, as will be reiterated by the admonitory preface to Book 5, but also to clear the way for the Franks finally to enter the narrative.

The details of the celebrated chapter that follows, Gregory's attempt to string together the little information about the early Franks that he could derive from his sources, need not concern us, unless for its unequivocal assertion of his priorities. Although a succession of Roman emperors, usurpers, and generals come and go, their role is simply to contextualize gobbets of known Frankish activity; it is here, for example, that Gregory alludes for the only time within his writings to the Sack of Rome by the Goths, but he does so merely to introduce the report of a contemporary Frankish victory over the Vandals in the Rhineland.[51] By the time Gregory is finally able to name a Frankish king, the nebulous Chlodio, the disintegration of imperial authority within Gaul into three discrete power-blocks – *Romani* and *Gothi* north and south of the Loire respectively, the *Burgundiones* over towards Lyons and the Rhône – is presented as a matter of fact rather than regret, and it requires no explanation. The imperial narrative, such as it is, gets tied up separately in a chapter dedicated to Gregory's fellow-Arvenian Avitus which acknowledges his local renown even as it aims to subvert it. This is achieved morally by tarring him with the brush of *luxuria*, always a cardinal sin for Gregory, and politically by detaching him from his Gallic context and, more specifically, his Gothic backers.[52] Gregory cites Marcian as Avitus' successor, but is more

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a Military Historian," in *World of Gregory of Tours*, 352–353, in support of precisely the fulsome impression of Aetius that Gregory was careful to qualify.

49   Gregory's exact source here – accounting for the plural historiographers of the chapter title – is unclear.

50   "Bad with worse": Goffart, *Narrators*, 177 and 218. Walter Goffart, "Conspicuously Absent: Martial Heroism in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours and its Likes," in *World of Gregory of Tours*, 374–375, nevertheless sees Gregory as cutting Aetius down to size rather than actively derogatory. Philip Wynn, "Wars and Warriors in Gregory of Tours' *Histories* I–IV," *Francia* 28 (2001), 12, takes a more positive view.

51   *Hist.* 2.9.

52   *Hist.* 2.11: "de Avito imperatore." For *luxuria*, see Danuta Shanzer, "History, Romance, Love, and Sex in Gregory of Tours' *Libri Historiarum*," in *World of Gregory of Tours*, 398, who

concerned to note the appointment of Aegidius as *magister militum*, through whom he will finally dissolve the imperial into the Gallic and Frankish narratives.[53] First, when the Franks temporarily depose Childeric, another *luxuria*-lover, they choose Aegidius, who it is reiterated was sent by the *res publica*, to replace him. The emphasis on this semi-legendary collaboration, in contrast to the omission of Avitus' very real reliance on the Goths, anticipates a key message of this book: the natural partners of the (Gallo)-Romans are the Franks and not the Goths (*Hist*. 2.12). This subtext recurs amid the annalistic narrative chapters that follow Childeric's bloodless restoration. Here, the relict *Romani* reappear as one of several competing ethnic interest groups, divorced from any imperial framework (*Hist*. 2.18–19). Whereas Aegidius was an imperial nominee, his son and heir Syagrius is depicted as an independent "king of the Romans," in which bastardized capacity he becomes the first victim of Frankish expansion under Clovis.[54] From Gregory's perspective, the fall of Syagrius' kingdom serves to epitomize the end of the *Romani* as a discrete political force within Gaul, but he had already detached these last Romans from the empire, and he does not endow their demise with any particular significance. Instead, it simply takes its place at the head of a series of similarly decisive victories by Clovis over rival peoples, which culminated in his recognition by the Emperor Anastasius. Whatever the real status of Syagrius' kingdom, or the precise dignity conferred upon Clovis by the emperor, these episodes are as far as Gregory goes towards an explanation or legitimation of the transfer of political authority over Gaul from the empire to the Franks. But

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detects irony in Gregory's reference to Avitus' subsequent preferment to the see of Piacenza. The basis of his regime goes unexplained, and his deposition is attributed to the senate. The chapter ends with the ex-emperor returning to Gaul and dying en route at St Julian's in Brioude; Gregory notes his tomb lay "at the feet of the martyr," but otherwise ignores it.

53   The reference to Marcian has sometimes been seen as an error for Majorian, but can alternatively be justified either as an accurate reference to his brief rule over the west in early 457, or as an indication of Gregory's confusion, since his only reference to Marcian's successor Leo has him reigning in Rome (*GC* 62). In the context of the *Histories* it is more to the point that it allows Gregory to shift imperial authority tacitly but firmly to the east from now on.

54   For Syagrius, see Edward James, "Childéric, Syagrius, et la disparition du royaume de Soissons," *Revue Archéologique de Picardie* 3/4 (1988), 9–12, and now John F. Drinkwater, "Un-becoming Roman. The End of Provincial Civilisation in Gaul," in *Gallien in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Kulturgeschichte einer Region,* (eds.) Steffen Diefenbach and Gernot Michael Müller (Berlin, 2013), 59–78. Aegidius *ex Romanus* (*sic*) is appointed *magister militum* in *Hist*. 2.11, and more explicitly sent by the empire in 2.12.

then he scarcely needed one, when, as proofs of divine favour, Clovis' victories were legitimising in themselves.

13.3   Peninsular Wars: Gregory, Italy, and the Emperors in the Sixth Century

The fundamental dynamic of relations between the Franks and the Byzantines remained remarkably consistent throughout the sixth century. It revolved around Italy, and more specifically around imperial aspirations to employ the Franks as a counterweight to the Ostrogothic and Lombard regimes that successively established themselves in the peninsula. This diplomatic strategy had effectively been instigated by the Emperor Anastasius' award of an honorary consulship to Clovis in 508, as described by Gregory in a technically-confused but contextually-credible account.[55] From the 530s onwards, however, it recurrently acquired a more urgent edge, as the Byzantines found themselves in intermittent, and at times somewhat desperate need of Frankish military support, first in order to wrest control of Italy from the Ostrogoths, and subsequently to secure it against the Lombards.

13.3.1   *Franks, Goths and Byzantines*

Gregory's sparse reporting within the *Histories* of the first, protracted phase of these conflicts, which we know from Procopius as the Gothic War, renders it all but unrecognisable. He focuses first on how, under threat of reprisals, Theodahad, the "king of Tuscany," paid the Frankish kings 50,000 in gold in compensation for his steaming to death in a hot bath a daughter born to Theoderic, the late "king of Italy," by his wife, the sister of Clovis (*Hist.* 3.31). Gregory anonymizes the two women – the daughter is Amalasuintha, and her mother Audefleda – but tells the story of their falling out once the former came of age with characteristic relish.[56] The daughter, angered by her forcible separation from her servile lover Traguila (who is named) and his subsequent execution, had previously disposed of her mother by putting poison in the communion wine, allegedly taking advantage of the Arian custom of reserving a separate chalice for royalty; it was this that had led "the Italians" – there are no Romans

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55   *Hist.* 2.38; Michael McCormick, "Clovis at Tours, Byzantine Public Ritual and the Origins of Medieval Ruler Symbolism," in Evangelos Chrysos and Andreas Schwarcz (eds.), *Das Reich und die Barbaren* (Vienna, 1989), 155–180.

56   Amalasuintha: *PLRE* 2: 65–66; Audefleda: *PLRE* 2: 185. The latter had died in 526. Thorpe's translation misleadingly inserts their names throughout.

in Gregory's Italy any more than in Gaul – to invite Theodahad to replace her. Lurking within this fabulous farrago are several plausible pieces of information about Theodahad that find at least some corroboration in other sources, such as his complicity in Amalasuintha's death, and his making a substantial payment to the Franks.[57] The rest, of course, is shaped less by any desire to sketch the history of the Ostrogoths than by Gregory's usual prejudices about scheming women and heretical worship; he observes complacently that the Arian sacrament can be deadly, whereas a Catholic communicant would surely have been immune to any such murderous design.[58] Indeed, whereas he had already contrived efficiently if erratically to dispose of the Vandal kingdom within the space of two chapters, as we have seen, Gregory never directly acknowledges Gothic rule over Italy at all. Although the peninsula had come variously under attack from Huns, Goths, and Alemanni in the course of Book 2, the political situation there had been left unresolved.[59] Theoderic eventually fills this power vacuum, without explanation, as *rex Italiae*, but never as a Goth.[60] Gregory was well aware, even so, that Theoderic had been a persecuting Arian who planned a massacre of Italian Catholics and martyred Pope John, for which divine vengeance had sent him straight to hell.[61] He also recognized that Theoderic had once ruled over Arles, although the extension of (Ostro-)Gothic power to

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57   E.g. Procopius, *Wars* 5.3.2, (ed.) and trans. H.B. Dewing, 5 vols, LCL, (London and New York, 1914–1928) for Theodahad's Tuscan power-base, 5.4.25–27 (his role in Amalasuintha's death), and 5.13.14 (his planned payment of gold to the Franks, but for military support, not in compensation). Jordanes, *Getica* 306, (ed.) Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA 5.1 (Berlin, 1882), locates her death in a bath, but she dies by strangulation, as in other sources. John Moorhead, "Culture and Power among the Ostrogoths," *Klio* 68 (1986), 112–122, incorporates a noble attempt to extract more sense from the details of Gregory's story than they probably deserve.

58   Goffart, *Narrators*, 215, suggested that this "may be Gregory's most credulous statement;" it is not without competition. This is the only case where Gregory allows a Frankish princess who marries abroad to embrace Arianism.

59   Huns: *Hist.* 2.7; Goths: *Hist.* 2.9 (Rome only); Alemanni: *Hist.* 2.19 (repelled by Odoacer and Childeric).

60   *Rex Italiae* or *Italicus*: *Hist.* 3.31, and 3.5; *GM* 77. This may have contributed to Fredegar 2.57, who has Theoderic ruling the Goths in Italy without being one himself.

61   *GM* 39, which Gregory concedes he had learnt not from a written source, but *a fidelibus*. It has affinities, even so, with *Anonymus Valesianus pars posterior* 83–95, (ed.) and trans. John C. Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. 3, LCL (London and Cambridge MA, 1939), and Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 4.31, (ed.) and trans. Adalbert de Vogüé, *Grégoire le Grand, Dialogues* (Paris, 1978–1980).

Provence after Vouillé is all but passed over in silence.[62] One might conclude, therefore, that Gregory knew rather more about Theoderic and his kingdom than he chooses to record in the *Histories*, where, thanks to Clovis, the Goths belonged in Spain, and, begrudgingly, Septimania.

When Gregory pursues his newly-discovered interest in Italy in the next chapter, his interpretation of ongoing warfare in the peninsula therefore offers no role whatsoever for the Goths. Instead, the conflict is transformed into a straight fight between the Franks and the empire.[63] Theudebert invades and acquires much booty, only to pull out again with the spoils when his army is stricken by disease; Italy is introduced from the outset as, "so they say," an unhealthy place.[64] Before his withdrawal, Gregory has Theudebert reach Pavia, to which he subsequently directed his general Buccelen. The latter proved more successful, first subjecting *Italia minor* to Theudebert's rule, then turning his attention to *Italia maior*, where he achieved so many victories over Belisarius that the emperor was driven to replace him with Narses.[65] This made no difference as, after many battles, Buccelen took the whole of Italy and advanced to the sea, despatching great treasures back to Theudebert. When Narses reported this to the emperor, he responded by buying the support of other *gentes*, but to no effect. After defeating Narses once more, Buccelen finally occupied Sicily, again exacting tribute from it and sending it home to the king. Gregory duly ends the chapter by noting the great good fortune that attended Theudebert's general in these situations, but this was not to last. In the next book, amidst a succinct and unfavourable summary of the reign of Theudebald, he incorporates the cursory report that Buccelen, who had reduced the whole of Italy to Frankish rule, had finally met his death at the hands of Narses. Italy was now in imperial hands, and no-one, Gregory concluded, could wrest it back again thereafter.[66]

The sequence of events outlined by Marius of Avenches has long been combined with the much more comprehensive reports in Byzantine sources of the

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62 *GM* 77. Gregory also alludes to a general Gothic recovery in *Hist.* 3.21, and to their control of Arles in *Hist.* 3.23, but never explains the extension of Frankish power to Provence, which was conceded to them by the Ostrogoths at the outbreak of the Gothic War, together with the gold he does mention in *Hist.* 3.31: Procopius, *Wars* 5.14, 24–29.

63 *Hist.* 3.32, heading: "Quod Theodoberthus in Italiam abiit."

64 *Hist.* 3.32: "Sed quia loca illa, ut fertur, morbida sunt."

65 Walter Pohl, "Gregory of Tours and Contemporary Perceptions of Lombard Italy," in *World of Gregory of Tours*, 138, suggests the distinction may represent the residue of official terminology, but it also serves the schematic structuring of Gregory's account, as discussed below.

66 *Hist.* 4.9: "Italiam ad partem imperatoris captam, nec fuit qui eam ultra reciperet."

campaigns of Theudebert and Buccelen in Italy to show how Gregory's account of these episodes is both ignorant and confused.[67] In particular, Gregory has been decried for failing to put the king's campaigns of 539 and those of his general in 553/4 into their wider military contexts, conflating the two into a single, chronologically-impossible episode, and exaggerating Frankish successes. These criticisms are certainly valid, but within the confines of his own narrative, Gregory's account makes more sense than it might appear. For him, as we have seen, this is no Gothic War in which the Franks are embroiled, but a military adventure of their own devising.[68] The compression of the action conforms to a pattern found elsewhere in his treatment of events in Italy and Spain, which are sometimes rounded up in summary form, and often, as here, within a block of chapters that deal with the two regions in turn.[69] Within these self-imposed interpretative and structural limitations, Gregory does at least preserve the echo of a break between Theudebert and Buccelen's campaigning, even if, by taking pains to misattribute all the triumphs of the Franks in Italy to the reign of the admirable Theudebert, Gregory deliberately stores up their eventual defeat to serve as divine commentary on the reign of the king's unimpressive heir.[70] Finally, the same prioritising of rhetorical effect over historical precision is evident in the highly stylized nature of Gregory's reporting of Buccelen's achievements, as the general repeatedly subjugates another part of the peninsula, provokes an unavailing reaction from the

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67   Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s.a. 538, 539, 555, 556, (ed.) and trans. Justin Favrod, *La Chronique de Marius d'Avenches (455–581)*, 2nd ed. (Lausanne, 1993). Procopius, *Wars* 6.12.38; 6.18.21, 38–42; 6.22.9; 6.25.1–24; 6.28.7–23; 7.33.1–7; 7.37.1; 8.24.4–30; 8.26.18–20; 8.33.3–7; 8.34.17–18, 21. Agathias, *Histories*, 1.1–7, 11–12, 14–22; 2.1–14, (ed.) R. Keydell, *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum libri quinque* (Berlin, 1967). For an analytical narrative of Frankish campaigns in Italy down to 561, see Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Imperium* (Opladen, 1983), 18–25.

68   Cf. Marius, *Chronica* s.a. 548, 555, explicitly dubbing Frankish interventions in Italy the "Roman war." Procopius was also well-aware of the Frankish pursuit of self-interest, e.g. *Wars* 6.25.1, 8.24.7, 8.34.18.

69   The summary quality of some of these chapters has already been seen in Gregory's treatment of the rise and fall of the Vandal kingdom. It recurs, for example, in his introductory report of Hermenegild's revolt, where *Hist.* 5.38 gives an outline that Gregory will subsequently return to and fill out in *Hist* 6.18, 33, 40, 43; see Roger Collins in this volume. For the blocking of Italian alongside Spanish material, see the examples in Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 307 n. 40.

70   The compression would be all the more explicable if Buccelen was co-commander of the original Frankish invasion force of 539, as noted by Jonas, *Vita Iohannis Abbatis Reomaensis* 15, (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 3 (Hanover, 1896); he would then have reprised the role in the campaign of 553 (Agathias, *Histories* 1.14.5).

empire, then dutifully sends the rewards home to his king, in a threefold patterning often employed by the bishop, and ultimately inspired by biblical archetypes.[71] His Buccelen is very much a literary creation, who is not conducting a series of realistic campaigns, but dominating an abstract Italian landscape on Theudebert's behalf, at the expense of an anonymous emperor, his hapless generals, and their hired *gentes*.[72]

That emperor is, of course, Justinian, but his anonymity here is part of Gregory's near-exclusion of the defining personality of the sixth-century Mediterranean from the *Histories*, wherein he is named only on his death, which is reported without comment (*Hist.* 4.40). We can infer from Gregory's hagiographical writings, which include the tale of how the cash-strapped emperor was outsmarted in an attempt to tap the wealth of Anicia Juliana that, as in the case of Theoderic, he could have said more.[73] Instead, the series of western campaigns that we conventionally classify as the "Justinianic reconquests" are scattered through the *Histories* in such a way as to deprive them of the slightest coherence, and the emperor responsible is left unnamed throughout. Indeed, when Gregory briefly alludes to imperial military intervention in Spain in the time of the tyrannical Agila, he does so only to cast it in an unfavourable light, describing how Athanagild, Agila's successor, regained some of the cities "which [the imperial army] had wrongfully taken": *quas male pervaserant*.[74] This is a phrase that recurs in the *Histories* in reference to the inappropriate seizure of cities or property, always in contexts where the author's disapproval is evident.[75] Here, therefore, Gregory appears to favour even the interests of the horrendous Goths over imperial military intervention in the west. Although this is the only occasion on which Gregory explicitly identifies

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71 Gregory's penchant for the artificial structuring of military episodes along such lines is especially apparent in the successive peace-offers and their rejections of *Hist.* 4.14 and 5.15. His accounts of spiritual warnings often take similar threefold form, e.g. *GM* 22.

72 The constructed character of Buccelen is rightly emphasized by Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 29: "Gregory seems unaware of or uninterested in the historical Buccelen." For him, see *PLRE* 3: 253–254 (Butilinus 1).

73 *GM* 102, a tale rich in circumstantial detail; for context, see R.M. Harrison, *A Temple for Byzantium: the Discovery and Excavation of Anicia Juliana's Palace Church in Istanbul* (London, 1989); Justinian also appears incidentally in *GM* 30.

74 *Hist.* 4.8. The emperor is again misleadingly deanonymized in Thorpe's translation of the *Histories*.

75 *Male pervadere*: e.g. *Hist.* 4.16 (re Chramn's seizure of his father's lands); 4.49 (Theudebert's attack on Tours and Poitiers); 5.36 (Count Nantinus' seizure of church property in Angoulême); 8.21 (property seized by Guntram Boso). Other similar examples merely change the verb.

with opponents of the empire, it is consistent with his lack of any particular sympathy for its interests. More specifically, it implicitly highlights his imperviousness to the co-religionist rhetoric through which the Byzantines were consistently looking to stimulate the Franks into acting in their support, a theme to which we shall have cause to return.

13.3.2   *Modelling Emperors*

Having finally named Justinian simply in order to dispense with him, Gregory immediately introduces his successor in the most damning terms: Justin is thoroughly avaricious, potentially heretical, and ultimately insane. We learn, nevertheless, that he did have enough sense to co-opt as his Caesar Tiberius, who is presented from the outset as his antithesis: just, generous in alms, evenhanded, victorious, and, most importantly of all, the truest Christian.[76] Gregory's unfavourable verdict upon Justin II has been so widely shared among historians then and now that it scarcely comes as a surprise, but this is to lose sight of its peculiarities. First, Gregory had no obvious reason for despising an emperor who had obliged Radegund with a fragment of the True Cross and been fulsomely thanked for it by his friend Fortunatus, and who had been engaged in diplomatic relations with his king.[77] Secondly, while the emperor's overwhelming greed and eventual madness are commonplaces of contemporary criticism, his supposed flirtation with the Pelagian heresy is not only anachronistic, but peculiar to Gregory; this is all the more odd given that the bishop otherwise shows no interest in Pelagianism, is indifferent to contemporary theological controversies between east and west, and, as we have seen, is generally disinclined to associate emperors with heresy. But whatever the origin of this peculiar charge, one might assume it is intended primarily to stand in antithesis to the true piety of Tiberius, whose virtues Gregory will go on to emphasize across three further chapters, dedicated by their titles to his charity, his reign, and his death. As Caesar, he explains to the *augusta* Sophia the higher purpose of charity, and for his commitment to laying up treasure in heaven God grants him earthly rewards in abundance.[78] On his elevation to the purple at Justin's death, Tiberius escapes a plot to assassinate him by proceeding to the holy shrines rather than the circus, pardons the figurehead of the coup, and shows himself equally merciful even when Sophia seeks to resurrect the plan;

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76   *Hist.* 4.40, with Cameron, "Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*" for the parallel vedicts of eastern sources.

77   Averil Cameron, "The Early Religious Policies of Justin II," *Studies in Church History* 13 (1976), 51–67; Moreira, "*Provisatrix Optima.*"

78   *Hist.* 5.19, heading: "de aelimosinis Tiberii."

after all this, naturally, he defeats the Persians and gains great booty.[79] His death, finally, provides the cue for a further reprise of his virtues and a last demonstration of his sagacity, as he consults Sophia about his successor, accepts her suggestion of the general Maurice, but then subverts her cunning plan to marry him.[80]

Gregory's Tiberius is evidently much too good to be true, and, as is so often the case, particularly with his reporting of events beyond Gaul, the internal coherence of the individual episodes is stronger than the logical consistency of the running narrative.[81] The content of these chapters provides perhaps our strongest indications, even so, that Gregory has good circumstantial information about Byzantine affairs at his disposal that he interprets through familiar tropes of trickery and deception, and favourite stereotypes such as the devious royal widow with marriage in mind.[82] But his eulogising of Tiberius does not proceed from any specific interest in that emperor's western policies (which, as we shall see, are mentioned only indirectly), and still less from any latent enthusiasm for emperors or empire in general. Instead, Tiberius serves as a suitably remote – and safely deceased – model, who functions not only as a vehicle for Gregory's general ideals of rulership, but more specifically to point up the glaring deficiencies of Chilperic, the emperor's contemporary in control of Tours.

The connection between Tiberius and Chilperic is signalled by Gregory in his aforementioned report of the delayed return of the latter's envoys from the imperial court in 581, which, as we have seen, the bishop witnessed at firsthand. Although the reign of Tiberius was a period of intensive diplomatic contact between the imperial and Frankish courts, Gregory's reporting of these initiatives is sporadic and his references to their objectives allusive, and this episode is no exception. Instead, Gregory holds our gaze on those glorious treasures that Chilperic paraded before his eyes: the weighty gold *missorium*, studded with gems, which the king had commissioned to honour and ennoble the Frankish *gens*, and the gold medallions that he had lately received from the emperor. In declaring his intention to have similar objects made, the king is clearly inflamed by an urge towards *imitatio imperii*, the emulation of the

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79   *Hist.* 5.30, heading: "de imperio Tiberii."

80   *Hist.* 6.30, heading: "de obitu Tiberii imperatores (sic)."

81   E.g. Tiberius is presented as Justin's nominee in *Hist.* 4.40, whereas *Hist.* 5.19 emphasises his elevation by the people and association with Sophia, only for both populace and empress then to connive at his removal in *Hist.* 5.30.

82   Stereotypes: whatever Sophia's importance to Tiberius' regime, Gregory's account of her behaviour is too close to his depictions of contemporary Frankish queens to be taken at face value, particularly in regard to the improbable tale of her role in the selection of Maurice, for which he is the sole authority.

empire. Such pretensions are hardly unusual among the rulers of the western successor-states, but they appear to burn especially brightly in the aspirational Chilperic; Gregory shows the king planning circuses, writing poems, dabbling in theology and liturgy, tinkering with the alphabet (after the manner of the Emperor Claudius), and, less edifyingly, tormenting his victims in a modishly Byzantine fashion.[83] But in inviting his audience to admire Tiberius' golden *aurei*, Chilperic is learning the wrong lesson from the emperor and the superficial glister of his coins. We already know from Gregory that Tiberius owes his fortune to charity, that he has delivered homilies to Sophia about where the true treasure lies, and that by eschewing the familiar rituals of the circus for the holy shrines he has cheated death. Chilperic understands nothing of this. He follows the charioteer on Tiberius' *aurei* off down the wrong track, conceiving his circuses and his treasures in the vain pursuit of worldly glory. The set-piece at Nogent tells us nothing of the substance of their negotiations, but it does alert us to the conceptual link between the king and the emperor; their antithetical qualities are then emphasized by the series of echoes that reverberate through the narrative. Tiberius gives alms and finds pots of money; Chilperic raises taxes and so loses his sons.[84] Tiberius nurtures the poor; Chilperic despises them.[85] The true faith of Tiberius was rewarded with victory; Chilperic was never capable of realising that victory lies in the hand of God.[86] The emperor loved all men, and was loved by all, and his death left great sorrow among the people; Chilperic never really loved anyone, and was loved by no-one in return, so that everyone deserted him in death.[87] Tiberius could not hope for the perpetual rule promised by his *aurei*, but he could anticipate a heavenly reward; Gregory has Guntram see Chilperic melting away in a hellish cauldron (*Hist.* 8.5). He also amuses himself by observing sardonically how the king's behaviour had indeed reminded him of an emperor: Nero.[88] For all Tiberius' virtues, there was nothing to aspire to about emperors *per se*.

Once Tiberius has designated Maurice his heir, and outwitted Sophia by marrying him off to his daughter, the dying emperor's last act in the *Histories* is

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83   *Hist.* 5.17, 5.44, 6.5, 6.46: Gregory's disapproval is clear.

84   Compare the titles of *Hist.* 5.19, "de aelimosinis Tiberii," and 5.28, "de discriptionibus Chilperici," the deadly consequences of which are brought home to the king in 5.34.

85   *Hist.* 5.19; 6.46.

86   *Hist.* 5.30; 6.41.

87   *Hist.* 6.30; 6.46, where the contrast between "omnes diligens, ipse diligebatur ab omnibus," and "nullum umquam pure dilexit, a nullo dilectus est" is particularly pointed.

88   *Hist.* 6.46, where Chilperic is compared to Nero twice, once generically alongside Herod (as in the criticism of Cautinus in *Hist.* 4.12), but also more specifically, in ironic reference to his cultural complacency.

to advise his successor to rule with equity and justice. Whether Gregory thought that Maurice was doing so is unclear, since his intermittent appearances in the narrative are marked by an absence of the decisive judgements that permeate the bishop's observations on Justin and Tiberius. From the outset, when the new emperor proceeds without incident through the accession ritual, Gregory declines to offer the merest adjective that might tell us what we should think of him, and we are never again transported to the imperial court or the Persian front, nor introduced to the problems in the Balkans that were coming to be of increasing concern to Byzantines and Franks alike.[89] The distinction between this studiedly neutral portrayal of Maurice, the sustained idealisation of Tiberius, the cursory condemnation of Justin, and the omission of Justinian may be conditioned to some unknowable degree by the nature and extent of Gregory's information, but it is clearly driven primarily by considerations of emplotment which are not always as transparent as in the contrasting of Tiberius with Chilperic. Gregory appears deliberately allusive about the *Realpolitik* of Tiberius' diplomatic dealings with the Franks, for example, whereas the nature and purpose of Maurice's similar initiatives are directly established: one is reduced to a moral exemplar, the other to the promotion of military action. For Maurice's role in the *Histories* is precisely the one that Gregory had denied to his predecessors, that of provoking Frankish intervention in Italy by every means at his disposal.[90]

13.3.3   *Franks, Lombards, and Byzantines*

The Lombard invasion of Italy in 568 had rapidly re-established the unstable political situation that had prevailed in the peninsula throughout the Gothic War, leaving the empire with the familiar problem of how to shore up its hard-won conquests without deploying manpower that was urgently needed on other fronts, at a time when, as Menander had a Persian envoy complacently explain, "the Roman empire…is fighting in many parts of the world and has its forces divided in hostilities with almost every barbarian nation."[91] After the failure of a military counter-offensive under Baduarius in 576, the

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89   *Hist.* 6.30, where Maurice's elevation is described with similar details to that of Tiberius, but is devoid of any attendant drama; Gregory's only reference to political events in the East after this point, in *Hist.* 10.24, is Bishop Symon's retrospective account of the Persian invasion of the 570s.

90   *Hist.* 6.42; 8.18; 9.25; 10.2; 10.4; his only action outside this framework is to approve the election of Gregory I as Pope in *Hist.* 10.1.

91   Menander, fragment 26.1, (ed.) and trans. R.C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985).

Byzantines therefore settled into a policy of trying to buy Lombard leaders over to their side, or, failing that, to pursue the familiar solution of suborning the Franks into fighting in Italy on their behalf.[92] While the emperors ran through their playbook of the strategies through which this goal might potentially be realized – cultural diplomacy, sponsoring of regime change, financial inducements, and the taking and exploitation of hostages – the Lombard leaders, like their Ostrogothic predecessors, were just as anxious to neutralize the risk of Frankish invasion. Although Lombard raiding had repeatedly spilled over into Gaul during the early 570s, following their initial advance into Italy, these attacks had been definitively halted by the victories of the patrician Mummolus. From then on, the Lombards were firmly on the defensive, and eager to pursue diplomatic solutions to the problem of keeping the Franks at bay. In this aim they were abetted by the divided nature of the Merovingian kingdoms, whose rulers were regularly distracted by internal conflicts for a generation after Charibert's death in 567, and disinclined to develop any collective approach to the possibility of military intervention outside Francia.[93] The febrile state of Frankish politics in this period compromised their kings' ability to mount effective campaigns in Italy, even as it complicated the diplomatic initiatives of Lombards and Byzantines alike. It will also have done much to shape Gregory's own perspective on events in the peninsula, not least, for example, when he found himself on an embassy charged with winning support for Childebert II's planned invasion of Italy from Guntram, the senior Merovingian, who remained implacably opposed to any such undertakings.[94]

Although the Lombards had been a familiar presence on the eastern penumbra of the Frankish kingdoms for some time, where they were prominent enough to have concluded a succession of marriage-alliances with the Merovingians, Gregory takes no substantive interest in them until their invasion and conquest of Italy.[95] This is unequivocally if generically signalled as bad – they rob churches

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92   Baduarius: John of Biclar, *Chronicon* 37, (ed.) Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, CCSL 173A (Turnhout, 2001). Byzantine policy: Menander, fragment 22, and for their dealings with the Lombards in general, Walter Pohl, "The Empire and the Lombards: Treaties and Negotiations in the Sixth Century," in *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, (ed.) Walter Pohl (Leiden, 1997), 75–133.

93   See Stefan Esders, above, ch. 12.

94   *Hist.* 9.20: the Italian question is put by his fellow-envoy Felix.

95   Gregory reports three such marriages: Theudebert to Wisgard (*Hist.* 3.20, 3.27), Theudebald to Vuldetrada (*Hist.* 4.9), and Alboin to Chlodoswintha (*Hist.* 4.3, 4.41). But Wisigard appears as "the daughter of a certain king," and her sister Vuldetrada is given no background; the Lombards are introduced by name only with the marriage of Alboin, their king.

and kill bishops – but without direct reference to imperial or vestigial Frankish interests in the region, while Gregory rattles through his version of the celebrated story of the poisoning of Alboin by his second wife as vengeance for her father with little of his customary enthusiasm for royal revenge tragedies.[96] Instead, this chapter serves primarily to set up the ensuing accounts of a number of menacing Lombard raids deep into Gaul, which are dominated by the patrician Mummolus, whose martial *virtus* in repelling them is divinely-backed, and, in this context at least, enthusiastically celebrated.[97] Amid a wealth of circumstantial detail, Gregory makes incidental allusion to the presence of an imperial force in Susa, but the decisive factor in spurring the Lombards to retreat is very much the terrifying prospect of Mummolus riding to its rescue.[98] Gregory will later return to these raids in a different register when celebrating the holiness of Hospitius, who predicts them as a divinely-ordained scourge, and then intimidates the invaders with his own brand of *virtus*; this time the Lombards are ciphers from Gregory's stock of irreverent cartoon villains, foils for the saint's power just as their various leaders had been for the prowess of the general.[99]

Once the Lombards were back where they now belonged, on the Italian side of the Alps, they return for the best part of a decade to the periphery of Gregory's narrative. Although imperial initiatives to encourage Frankish intervention in Italy were certainly instigated under Tiberius, they proved unsuccessful, and Gregory acknowledges them only in indirect and enigmatic

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96 *Hist.* 4.41, heading: "Quod Alboenus cum Langobardis Italiam occupavit," part of a block of four chapters (4.40–4.44) dealing with the empire or the Lombards, interrupted only by a *cause célèbre* in Marseilles. Rosamond is unnamed. Gregory's narrative simplifies matters by treating Italy as lost to the Franks after Theudebald, although he does allude to Sigibert's holdings there in *Hist.* 9.20 and 10.3. See Georg Löhlein, *Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik der Merowinger im VI. Jahrhundert* (Erlangen, 1932), 48–53.

97 *Hist.* 4.42, 4.44. Cf. GM 68. A divinely-inspired animal shows Mummolus the crossing of the Isère, for which cf. Clovis in *Hist.* 2.37. In comparing the portrayal of Mummolus here to those of Aetius and Clovis before him, Wynn, "Warriors," 29–31, rightly stresses how Gregory's celebration of his legitimate defence of Francia is designed in counterpoint to the ignominious civil wars that soon conclude the book. Mummolus is nevertheless no better than Aetius in Gregory's eyes, as the wider framing of his exploits in these chapters and subsequent events makes clear.

98 *Hist.* 4.44: Sisinnius, *magister militum* is here resident in Susa, presumably as a relic of Narses' defensive strategies.

99 *Hist.* 6.6. Cf. the similar tale of a failed beheading of a holy man in GC 12. The contrast between the personal detail of Mummolus' campaigns and its absence from Hospitius' story highlights Gregory's adherence to conventions of genre.

fashion.[100] In part, this is probably lest they detract from his idealized image of the emperor, but his discretion was also essential because they touched on two of the most enduringly sensitive issues in contemporary Merovingian politics, the fatal alliance of 581 between Chilperic and Childebert, and the so-called Gundovald affair.[101] Any sustained attempt to penetrate the thick fog of accusation and rumour in which Gregory is careful to envelop this material lies beyond the scope of this chapter, but it has plausibly been argued that each of these episodes had an imperial dimension that was directed ultimately towards the furtherance of their hopes of generating Frankish cooperation in Italy.[102] The first phase of the plot to recall Gundovald from his comfortable exile in Constantinople and install him upon a Merovingian throne, in particular, could not have been conceived without Byzantine connivance. Whatever the specific objectives of this conspiracy, it can only have been the potential installation of a ruler sympathetic to their interests that had persuaded the Byzantines not merely to negotiate Gundovald's return with Guntram Boso, but apparently to bankroll the enterprise by equipping him with a vast treasure.[103] They must have been all too aware, nevertheless, that their ability to influence the future prospects of the pretender had effectively evaporated as soon as they waved him off from the quayside in Constantinople, even if they could scarcely have expected his Frankish mentor brazenly to denounce Gundovald as an imperial puppet immediately on his arrival at Marseilles.[104]

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100   Menander, fragment 22 signals the instigation of these initiatives; they are in progress in *Epistolae Austrasicae* 48, (ed.) and trans. Elena Malaspina, *Il* Liber epistolarum *della cancellaria austrasica (sec. V–VI)* (Rome, 2001), of 579/80. See Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 29–33.

101   *Hist.* 6.1–3; 6.24. Gregory does link Hermenegild's revolt more directly to Tiberius: *Hist.* 5.38, 6.18, 6.43.

102   This at least is generally agreed, but there is little consensus about the precise objectives of the plan. The most sustained attempt to piece together the intricate diplomatic triangulations of this period remains Walter Goffart, "Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: the Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald (579–585)," *Traditio* 13 (1957), 73–118, though the author has since disowned its empirical approach, and modifies some of its arguments in idem, "The Frankish Pretender Gundovald, 582–585. A Crisis of Merovingian Blood," *Francia* 39 (2012), 1–28. Among the alternative versions, see Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 33–42; Constantin Zuckerman, "Who Recalled the *Ballomer* Gundovald to Gaul?" *Francia* 25 (1998), 1–18. I hope to return to Gundovald elsewhere.

103   The empire appears the only feasible source of Gundovald's original treasure, expropriated by Guntram Boso soon after his arrival in Marseilles: *Hist.* 6.24, 7.36. There is no reason to equate this with the 50,000 in gold paid to Childebert by Maurice, as is still maintained by Goffart, "Frankish Pretender," pp. 14–15.

104   This precise accusation is peculiar to Guntram Boso, who in *Hist.* 6.24 accuses Theodore of wishing to subject the Frankish kingdom to imperial control by introducing an outsider;

Despite the continuing unpredictability of Frankish politics, the Byzantines did finally get what they wanted under Maurice, when the Austrasians embarked on a succession of campaigns that had the primary aim of expelling the Lombards from Italy, and are reported by Gregory in straightforward, if typically episodic fashion.[105] In 584, Childebert marched into the peninsula, but promptly withdrew when the Lombards submitted and swore allegiance; Gregory provides no details of this campaign, while still claiming it as a complete success from the Frankish perspective.[106] Even so, the king despatched another army the following year, which this time returned empty-handed after his dukes fell out among themselves.[107] The next such campaign, in 588, went still worse for Childebert's forces, who suffered what Gregory describes, again without specifics, as an unprecedentedly severe defeat.[108] A similar invasion planned for the coming year was aborted on receipt of a Lombard offer of a tributary alliance (*Hist.* 9.29), but when this came to nothing, Childebert mobilized a substantial force under some twenty dukes. Gregory's report of this attack in 590, unlike all the others, is highly circumstantial – seven dukes turned right on entry to Italy, and thirteen left, and so on – but the details are unremittingly unfavourable.[109] Having prefigured its failure by highlighting the destructive wake left by the Frankish armies within their own territory, he explains how their efforts in Italy were undermined by their commanders' carelessness, Lombard ambushes and ruses, a no-show by imperial forces, dysentery, the unhealthy air, the impregnability of the enemy and their king, and, finally, hunger. In among this relentless catalogue of woes, the invaders do achieve some qualified success, extracting oaths of allegiance to Childebert from areas formerly held by

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the irony here is particularly savage. Others note his outsider status in more general terms, e.g. *Hist.* 7.27 (Magnulf), 7.14, 8.2 (Guntram). Gundovald himself acknowledges his generous reception by the emperors in *Hist.* 7.36.

105 Expulsion of Lombards: *Hist.* 6.42, 9.20, 9.25. In *Hist.* 9.20 a specifically Austrasian objective – the reclamation of territory once held by Sigibert – is also announced to Guntram, but this seems secondary in significance and certainly in scale to the restoration of imperial authority over the rest of the peninsula.

106 *Hist.* 6.42; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 3.17, (eds.) Ludwig Bethmann and Georg Waitz, MGH SRL (Hanover, 1878), is very similar.

107 *Hist.* 8.18; Paul, *Historia Langobardorum* 3.22, who adds that the split was between Frankish and Alemannic elements.

108 *Hist.* 9.25, followed by Paul, *Historia Langobardorum* 3.28–29.

109 *Hist.* 10.3; cf. Paul, *Historia Langobardorum* 3.31, dovetailing Gregory's account with further details of the Frankish destruction of fortresses and taking of captives derived from Secundus of Trent.

Sigibert, as well as prisoners and booty, but Gregory undercuts this by noting how they were compelled to give up their weapons and clothing on the way home in order to procure food. The chapter ends with Guntram's eirenic reception of Lombard envoys, who reiterate their desire for a defensive alliance in suitably respectful terms. But when he sends the embassy on to his nephew, its message is overtaken by news of the death of the Lombard king, and Childebert takes the chance to temporize.[110]

This spate of Austrasian campaigning in Italy was no doubt attributable in part to internal political considerations, such as Childebert attaining his majority, and the lull in internecine warfare that followed Chilperic's death and Gundovald's failure. But while Gregory presents its planning and execution predominantly from the Frankish perspective, as one would expect, he persistently explains the motivations behind it by reference to the empire, and makes regular, if selective mention of the recurrent diplomatic traffic between the two courts.[111] Having glossed over Tiberius' failed initiatives, Gregory directly acknowledges Maurice's more elementary opening bid to secure Austrasian cooperation in expelling the Lombards: a payment of 50,000 solidi. It was apparently this financial inducement that prompted the campaign of 584, because when Childebert made peace with the Lombards, Maurice asked for a refund of the money he had sent the king "some years before."[112] However, when Gregory goes on to associate the ensuing campaign of 585 directly with demands from imperial envoys for repayment, he locates the subsidy "in the previous year," so unless we implausibly assume that Maurice had sent good

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110   Gregory's King Aptachar is more familiarly known as Authari; he died in early September 590. Gregory has the otherwise unknown Paul as his successor; whether his reign was very brief, or this is an alternative name for Agilulf, king by November, is unclear.

111   Gregory's information is complemented by the batches of diplomatic correspondence preserved in the Austrasian Letters, but even taken together these do not preserve a comprehensive record of ambassadorial exchanges, and the slotting of the undated letters into Gregory's narrative framework presents various difficulties. The fullest discussion of this correspondence and its chronology remains Paul Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam, 2.1: Byzance et les Francs* (Paris, 1956), though it is not without problems, some of which are noted below. Gregory ignores Guntram's parallel diplomatic exchanges with the East; their apparent tensions emerge only from the cryptic Fredegar 4.6.

112   *Hist.* 6.42: "ante hos annos." The expression is curious, since Maurice succeeded only in August 582. Nevertheless, Gregory explicitly assigns the payment to Maurice, as does John of Biclar, *Chronicon* 70. Maurice's frustration with Childebert is equally palpable in *Epistolae Austrasicae* 42; its insulting reference to the king's "juvenile talk" dates it to his youth, but while Goubert, *Byzance*, 105–109, sees it as a response to the campaign of 584, its complaints about the lack of action may suggest that it belongs to September 583.

money after bad, this looks like a rare continuity error.[113] Gregory also neglects to explain why Childebert could insouciantly ignore Maurice's demands in 584, only to oblige the emperor by mounting another invasion in the following year. He does provide a possible hint by airily associating the latter campaign not only with the money, but with word of the transfer to Constantinople of Childebert's sister Ingund, who, as Gregory has already told us, had fallen into Byzantine hands during the suppression of her husband Hermenegild's revolt in Spain.[114] However, although the consternation that news of her predicament caused at the Austrasian court is soon made explicit when her mother Brunhild raises the issue at the autumn meeting of Childebert's magnates at Breslingen, Gregory places this after the campaign, and plays it down by noting that she received little sympathy (*Hist.* 8.21). In any case, the rumour turned out to be false; not long afterwards, we learn that Ingund had died en route in Africa. Gregory mentions here for the first and only time that she had her little son with her, but shows no concern for his fate.[115]

Gregory's lack of interest in the infant Athanagild was certainly not shared either by the Byzantines, who shipped him on to Constantinople as intended, or by the Austrasian court, where Childebert and Brunhild despatched an embassy in the hope of securing his immediate return.[116] The Byzantines were naturally in no hurry to oblige, since the hostage gave them the leverage they had hitherto been lacking. The uncompromising tenor of their reply can be surmised from the sending of another Austrasian embassy in return, late in 587 or early in 588, which bore letters assuring Athanagild of their continuing concern for his welfare, and several members of the imperial court of their enthusiasm for a permanent alliance.[117] These covering letters are not so crude either to link the two issues or reveal the substance of the negotiations, but it is surely

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113 *Hist.* 8.18: "anno superiore." It is not clear whether these are new demands. As in Gregory's episodic treatment of Hermenegild's revolt, one might well suspect some narrative overlap between the Italian chapters which, as in the case of the payment, has not always been neatly resolved.

114 *Hist.* 8.18, anticipated by *Hist.* 6.40, 6.43. Paul, *Historia Langobardorum* 3.22 cuts through Gregory's allusiveness and directly states that Childebert invaded Italy in order to recover his sister.

115 *Hist.* 8.28. Gregory instead shifts his focus to Guntram's intention to avenge Ingund by invading Spain.

116 *Epistolae Austrasicae* 43–45, and perhaps 47, which leave no doubt of the Austrasian sense that Athanagild was being held captive. This batch of letters is probably to be dated to 586 by the announcement of Childebert's majority in *Epistolae Austrasicae* 44. See Goubert, *Byzance*, 110–122.

117 *Epistolae Austrasicae* 25–39, with Goubert, *Byzance*, 127–159.

no coincidence that the Austrasians were galvanized into renewed action in Italy.[118] Gregory similarly associates the invasions of 588 and 590 directly with negotiations with the empire, even if, as we have seen, he ignores Athanagild's captivity. Instead, he gives the initiative in 588 to Childebert, who elects to abandon a mooted marriage-alliance with the Lombards and fulfil the emperor's request to drive them out of Italy, while the major invasion of 590 follows immediately upon the king's receipt of the report from his latest embassy to Constantinople.[119]

Although the high-level diplomatic exchanges preserved in the *Austrasian Letters* can be woven into Gregory's account to create a broadly coherent narrative, the discrepancies between them in content and tone are suggestive, and cannot wholly be explained by differences of genre. It seems inconceivable, for example, that Gregory was unaware of Athanagild's presence in Constantinople. He knew of the Byzantines' plans for Ingund, of Brunhild's concern for her fate, and of her son's presence with her in Africa, and he was sufficiently close to the Austrasian court to have been entrusted by Childebert with an embassy to Guntram that discussed, *inter alia*, the Italian question at the very time when his rulers were writing to Athanagild in Constantinople.[120] Gregory may simply have judged the princeling too insignificant to mention, but the continuing interest of Childebert and Brunhild in Athanagild's recovery makes it more plausible that he chose for whatever reason to suppress his existence as a factor in Austrasian policy-making.[121] More generally, too, the *Austrasian Letters* remind us of the significant conceptual absences from Gregory's account of Franco-Byzantine relations. Whereas for the most part this correspondence adheres closely to conventional protocols of address and content, and the Austrasian rulers dutifully adopt, however nominally, a deferential attitude to their imperial father, Gregory never admits any idea of a hierarchy of powers into his thinking, but treats kings and emperors throughout as equal partners, answerable only to God. On the other hand, whereas the contemporary diplomatic exchanges are saturated with religious references, Gregory refuses to

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118   The connection is most visible in *Epistolae Austrasicae* 27–28, sent to Athanagild by Brunhild and Childebert respectively; the former explains that Austrasian proposals will be conveyed to the emperor verbally. The more formal tone of the letters to the emperor and his court is misunderstood by Goubert, *Byzance*, 135–137, as a sign of dwindling concern for Athanagild's deliverance.

119   *Hist.* 9.25; 10.3.

120   *Hist.* 9.20, early in 588.

121   In the absence of extant correspondence between the courts after 588, we cannot tell if Athanagild was also a factor in the invasion of 590, though one might suspect that was indeed the case. His subsequent fate is unknown.

endow the issue of military cooperation in Italy with any moral dimension. From the very beginning of their attempts to draw the Franks into Italy, the Byzantines had invoked their mutual orthodoxy as a spur to action against the Goths – "it is right that you should join us in waging this war, which is made yours as well as ours not only by the orthodox faith, which rejects the opinion of the Arians, but also by the hatred we both feel towards the Goths" – only to reproach their allies bitterly for their failure to conform to Christian expectations.[122] But a generation after Procopius had resentfully catalogued Frankish faithlessness, Agathias was eager to explain it away again, in a triumph of wishful thinking indicative of renewed hopes in Constantinople of a Catholic alliance against the Lombard "enemies of God."[123] In 580, the Pope had joined in, urgently entreating the Frankish bishops to hurry their kings into capitalising on the providential boon of their mutual orthodoxy by acting against the impious Lombards.[124] This hoary leitmotif duly sounds through the extant diplomatic exchanges, where appeals from the imperial side to common Christian identity, again freighted with disappointment, are zealously reflected back to the court and to bishops in Italy by the Austrasians.[125] Again, Gregory is too well informed about contemporary negotiations for him not to have heard this constant refrain. Even so, he consciously refuses to sample it as any justification for the Italian campaigns.

Gregory's imperviousness to this prevailing contemporary discourse is similarly apparent in his depiction of the Lombards, who are not irreligious, but areligious.[126] This silence has long vexed historians, though it should be

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122   Procopius, *Wars*, 5.5.9 (for the quotation); and *Epistolae Austrasicae* 18.

123   For Frankish perfidy and godlessness, see e.g. Procopius, *Wars*, 6.25, 6.28, 8.24. Agathias, *Histories* 1.2–7 instead introduces them as civilized Christian types, and carries this through the subsequent narrative, where, for example, the plundering of churches in Italy by Buccelen's forces is not the fault of the Franks, who are "more or less" of the same religious persuasion as the Romans, but their Alemannic contingents (2.1): see Averil Cameron, "Agathias on the Early Merovingians," *Annali della Scuola Normale di Pisa* 37 (1968), 114–116, 136–138. "Enemies of God": *Epistolae Austrasicae* 40.8.

124   *Epistolae Aevi Merovingici Collectae* 9, (ed.) Wilhelm Gundlach, MGH Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892).

125   Among the more explicit examples, see e.g. *Epistolae Austrasicae* 40–41 (the exarch to the Austrasians), 30–31, 43–44 (Childebert and Brunhild to various figures at court), 46 (Childebert to the bishop of Milan). The theme is absent, however, from *Epistolae Austrasicae* 42, Maurice's one extant letter to Childebert, which reproaches the king by reference to his honour.

126   Gregory gives the religious persuasion of only two Lombards, both of whom are Catholics resident in Gaul: Wulfolaic, a model holy man (*Hist.* 8.15), and the would-be executioner of Hospitius, who repented and became a monk (*Hist.* 6.6). It is doubtful whether Childebert's decision to abandon his sister's proposed Lombard marriage for a Gothic one

recognized that there is nothing inherently unusual about it; Gregory eschews comment on the religious practices of any of the eastern neighbours of the Franks, unless we count his dark allusions to the necromantic capacities of the Huns.[127] In the case of the Lombards, however, the omission is pregnant with topical significance, as we have seen, and it coincides with his generally neutral, perhaps even latently sympathetic portrayal of their behaviour. Once confined to Italy, Gregory's Lombards play the part of injured innocents, who are repeatedly willing to acknowledge Frankish hegemony through the payment of tribute and swearing of oaths, and anxious to cement their relationship through the time-honoured device of a marriage alliance.[128] When Childebert reneges on the latter arrangement and invades, Gregory has his forces comprehensively but unspecifically defeated; he does incorporate an element of Lombard resistance into his more expansive account of the failure of the subsequent invasion of 590, but their reaction is still primarily passive. In each case, moreover, they respond by renewing their offers of peace and of a military alliance against their mutual enemies, which Childebert is encouraged by Guntram to accept. On the second occasion, Gregory reinforces the point by quoting their dignified protests of lasting fidelity to the Franks, which his account has done nothing to gainsay.

In marked contrast, when Gregory brackets his account of the latter campaign with his only detailed report of the recurrent embassies between the Austrasians and the empire, he concentrates upon an embarrassing diplomatic incident.[129] During a prolonged stopover in Carthage on their way to Constantinople, a junior member of the Austrasian entourage committed theft from a merchant, who eventually accosted him in the street, only to be killed in the ensuing struggle. The unwitting Frankish delegation soon found their

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because the latter were now Catholic is intended as any implicit comment on the religion of the former (*Hist.* 9.25).

127 *Hist.* 4.29. For various perspectives on Lombard religion, see Steven C. Fanning, "Lombard Arianism Reconsidered," *Speculum* 56 (1981), 241–258; Walter Pohl, "Deliberate Ambiguity: the Lombards and Christianity," in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals,* (eds.) Guyda Armstrong and Ian N. Wood (Turnhout, 2000), 47–58; Thomas S. Brown, "Lombard Religious Policy in the Late Sixth and Seventh Centuries: The Roman Dimension," in *The Langobards before the Frankish Conquest: An Ethnographic Perspective*, (eds.) Giorgio Ausenda, Paolo Delogu, and Chris Wickham (Woodbridge, 2009), 289–299.

128 *Hist.* 6.42 (submission); 9.25 (putative marriage-alliance); 9.29 (offer of tribute and alliance); 10.3 (protest of fidelity, offer of defensive alliance).

129 *Hist.* 10.2–4, which, with 10.1 on Pope Gregory, forms another block of international material.

lodgings surrounded by a force summoned by the prefect, bolstered by armed locals. Two of its leaders came out under guarantee of safe-conduct, only to be killed. The third, a Frank called Gripo, who was apparently a military type and a veteran of such missions, gathered his weapons and retainers and faced down the crowd, threatening them with dire consequences for relations between his kings and the empire.[130] When they had dispersed, the prefect sought to smooth things over, and sent Gripo on to deliver his message to the emperor, who promised retribution in accordance with Childebert's judgement. Despite its ominous beginnings in Carthage, Gripo's embassy was ostensibly successful, in that Childebert launched the invasion of 590 immediately on his return, but much less so in its realisation on the ground, which was likewise marred by a breakdown in mutual communications.[131] In the aftermath of its failure, Maurice despatched the supposed killers to Childebert, offering him their lives or 300 solidi a man in compensation in the hope of laying the matter to rest. Childebert again demurred – the dozen unfortunates paraded in chains before him could be any old slaves – and was backed up by Gripo, who, in a marvellously bumptious speech, asserts that some two or three thousand were involved, and offers to go back to Carthage to identify them so that the emperor can exact due vengeance. In an echo of his treatment of the Lombard embassy at the conclusion of the previous chapter, Childebert dismisses the envoys, and defers his decision.

Gregory leaves his account of the Italian question there, firmly in Childebert's hands, but both practically and morally unresolved. In line with his reluctance to pass judgement on either Childebert or Maurice, Gregory had never explicitly commented on the legitimacy of their ongoing collaboration in Italy, but his unprecedented interest in the detail of the invasion of 590 and the diplomatic activity surrounding it seems calculated to make it look futile and ridiculous.[132] We might deduce from this that the decision made shortly afterwards by his king to conclude a lasting peace with the Lombards would have pleased him.[133] There is, as we have seen, no aprioristic reason to

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130   Grip(p)o had been on two previous embassies: see *Epistolae Austrasicae* 43 and 25, which style them respectively as *vir inluster* and *spatharius*. The plural kings of Gripo's protest are problematic, given Guntram's apparent reluctance to get involved.

131   *Hist.* 10.3, where the Byzantines fail to meet an appointed rendezvous. The complaints are inverted in *Epistolae Austrasicae* 40, where the exarch protests that Frankish forces have failed to engage the Lombards as planned, but made peace instead.

132   For Gregory's discreet treatment of Childebert (and Brunhild), see Murray, "Chronology," 193.

133   Paul, *Historia Langobardorum* 4.1. Fredegar 4.45 reports that the Lombards agreed to pay Guntram and Childebert an annual tribute of 12,000 solidi, alongside territorial concessions to

assume he had any general sympathy for the empire, and a number of indications in his presentation of these events to the contrary. Whereas the Lombards appear in the guise of deserving and trustworthy allies, whose repeated goal is peace, the empire continually incites Childebert to war, and the relentless diplomatic exchanges between the two are epitomized by a tragicomic fiasco. Gregory establishes an independent and minimal Austrasian goal – the recapture of territory formerly in Frankish hands – and has Childebert achieve it, but makes no attempt to justify the greater war by resort to any of the obvious current pretexts: reprisals for earlier Lombard invasions, fidelity to the empire, or moral obligation to defend Christians against impious invaders.[134] Instead, the only invocation of divine support provided by Gregory in the context of the Italian war is, ironically, made by a Lombard, who entrusts victory in their conflict with the Franks to God; this was a ruse, and he died for it, but the Lombards still won in the end.[135]

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that for Gregory the wars in Italy were ultimately unrighteous. They were being directed against opponents who, having been defeated, had repeatedly offered peace.[136] When Franks fought in the peninsula, they fell ill, an outcome prefigured in Gregory's very first reference to Theudebert's campaigning there, anticipated by Guntram in his decisive refusal to countenance any such operations, and finally confirmed by the events of 590.[137] Finally, their very lack of success was a decisive revelation of divine judgement; Gregory knew that victory lay in God's gift.

Guntram. His dating of the origins of this arrangement to early in the reign of Maurice suggests it may coincide with their initial submission to the Franks in *Hist.* 6.42. From Fredegar's perspective it then continued unbroken until it was commuted to a lump sum of 36,000 solidi in 617.

134   Childebert's territorial objectives first emerge in *Hist.* 9.20, in the context of an attempt to persuade Guntram to participate in the invasion; they are said to have been achieved by the otherwise dismal campaign of 590 (*Hist.* 10.3). The territory in question was possibly the Val di Non, where the Frankish duke Chramnichis was active under Sigibert: Paul, *Historia Langobardorum* 3.9. For Gregory's rejection of available pretexts, cf. Pohl, "Contemporary Perceptions," 142, who nevertheless sees this as neutral rather than hostile.

135   *Hist.* 10.3. The Lombard invokes *Divinitas*, a term Gregory employs for the Christian God elsewhere.

136   Cf. the victories of the Saxons over the Franks and of the Suebi over the Saxons in *Hist.* 4.40 and 5.15, in each case after their repeated peace-offers had been rejected, with Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 6–8, on Gregory's ideas of just war.

137   *Hist.* 3.31; 9.20; 10.3. Ian N. Wood, "The Secret Histories of Gregory of Tours," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 71 (1993), 261, suggests that the praise of Guntram in *Hist.* 9.21 signals

13.4 Conclusion

Gregory's detailed reporting of the last Italian campaign and the diplomatic exchanges associated with it, like his stories of the Emperor Tiberius, shows just how well informed he could be about contemporary events in Italy and the East. His inclusion of such matters was obviously affected by the availability of information, but one can reasonably assume that he had far more of this material at his disposal than he needed or wanted to incorporate into his *Histories*. Instead, he deployed it selectively, in pursuit of specific narrative goals, much as he had reshaped the works of earlier chroniclers to his own ends while absorbing much of their phrasing into his account. This approach was considered and purposeful, whether in its elevation of Tiberius into a model ruler, or its criticism of Austrasian foreign policy, but it was also discreet. Gregory obscures Tiberius' ill-fated Frankish initiatives the better to extol his virtues, and is careful never to give his opinion of Childebert's adventures in Italy, however much we might think that he shared Guntram's view that it was no place for a Frankish army. But the *historiae* of Italy and the east were of no interest in themselves, except on the few occasions when it suited Gregory to incorporate them into his narrative to frame his account of *gesta praesentia* within the Gauls or to facilitate moral commentary upon domestic concerns. For, as we have seen, Gregory was determined to assign no particular political or religious value to the empire; he did not regret its disappearance from the west, and he retained no loyalty, however residual, to imperial interests. The world around him was still recognisably Roman in numerous respects, though this was on the cusp of changing, but in his attitudes the bishop of Tours was emphatically post-Roman and post-imperial. His focus was firmly on encouraging his audience not to pine for the glory of the Romans, in the present or the past, but to behave in such a way that might help them to attain a heavenly future.

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his tacit agreement with the king's rejection of the views on Italy and other matters that Gregory and Felix had put to him on Childebert's behalf in the preceding chapter.

Gregory of Tours and Spain

Roger Collins

14.1   Gregory as a Source for Spanish Affairs

Gregory's narrative about Spain and Spanish matters is focused largely on religious issues, even when these involved diplomacy and warfare. Distinctions like these, however, were not those the bishop of Tours would have made or recognized. A good example of his approach is his description of the campaign conducted in 531 by Childebert I (ca 511–558) against the Visigothic king Amalaric (a. 526–531), prompted by the latter's ill-treatment of his wife, Chlothild, who was the Frankish monarch's sister.[1] While recording the death of Amalaric in Barcelona in a version that conflicts with Spanish accounts, Gregory gives very few details of the military events, which are almost incidental to his narrative, but instead includes precise figures for the 60 chalices, 15 patens and 20 gold and bejeweled Gospel covers that Childebert carried off as loot to distribute amongst various episcopal and monastic churches in Francia.[2]

Similarly, Gregory reports on how the Arian bishop of Narbonne died of despair when he failed to prevent the inhabitants of the province of *Narbonensis* accepting Catholicism following the conversion of the Visigothic king Reccared in 587 (*Hist*. 9.15). However, the Spanish hagiographic text known as the *Vitas Patrum Emeretensium* indicates that this episcopal bitterness took the more concrete form of a revolt, in which Bishop Athalocus joined the Narbonese counts Granista and Wildigern in a failed rising against the king – a dimension

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1   It should be noted that the name 'Visigoth' was not used either in Spain at the time or by Gregory, and that those whom we normally call 'Visigoths' referred to themselves and were called by most others just 'Goths.' The anachronistic terms 'Visigoths' and 'Visigothic' are retained here merely for convenience because of their undeserved familiarity.

2   *Hist*. 3.10; cf. Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 40, (ed.) Cristóbal Rodríguez Alonso, *Las Historias de los Godos, Vándalos y Suevos de Isidore de Sevilla. Estudio, edición crítica y traducción* (León, 1975), 238.

of the event entirely lacking in Gregory's account.[3] As this suggests, Gregory could render complex events with multiple participation as simple stories of the interaction of a few key actors, often expressed through invented dialogue, however improbable. One often unnoticed effect of this practice is to reduce much of what he reports about the society and politics of 6th-century Francia to little better than a series of thuggish 'Game of Thrones' scenarios, a perspective at variance with the more limited documentary evidence, but influential enough to dominate the scholarly and popular perceptions of the period.

His preference for a confined focus also manifests itself in a lack of geographical and chronological precision, which can extend to the names of people as well as of places. For example, he gives a lengthy account of how a Gallic priest was pressured by the Visigothic king Leovigild to convert from Catholicism to Arianism. Yet, although Gregory reveals that he acquired the story at first hand from the priest himself, he does not even include the man's name (*GM* 81). Similarly, while he sometimes is specific in his references to Spanish towns, on other occasions he locates events he describes as occurring in "a certain Spanish city."[4]

To be fair, Gregory can also provide very detailed information about his informants and the contexts in which he met them. Sometimes, though, statements he makes with apparent confidence can be shown to be factually erroneous. For example, he confuses the Vandal king Thrasamund (a. 496–523) with his father Geiseric (a. 428–477) in an account of that monarch's otherwise unknown and most unlikely attempt to impose Arianism in Spain (*Hist*. 2.2). Likewise he refers to the Visigothic kings Athanagild (a. 554–568) and Leovigild (a. 569–586) as brothers, something that perhaps the identical suffixes of their names might have suggested to him (*Hist*. 4.38). In reality he is conflating two different royal dynasties: firstly that of Athanagild (a. 554–568), and secondly that of the entirely unrelated Liuva I (a. 568-572/3), who associated his own brother Leovigild as co-ruler in 569. Similarly, in one of his hagiographical works Gregory implies a reign for king Theudegisel (a. 548–549) of at least three to four years, which is greater than the reality (*GM* 24.). So, his evidence cannot be taken to be beyond question, even when he is the sole source for the information he provides.

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3 *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium* 5.12.9, (ed.) A. Maya Sánchez, CCSL 116 (Turnhout, 1992), 92–93. Gregory's reference to the bishop's death and the chronological limitations of his work undermine the arguments of those who would date this revolt to 589 rather than 587: E.A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford, 1969), 103, and Luís García Moreno, *Prosopografía del reino visigodo de Toledo* (Salamanca, 1974), no. 69 (Granista), 52.

4 E.g. *Hist*. 6.43.

In the same way, what are no more than opinions on his part have some-
times been given more respect than they deserve. A particularly obvious case
of this is his reference to the supposed *morbus Gothicus*, the Gothic disease, or
tendency of the Goths to kill their kings (*Hist.* 3.30). This is sometimes quoted
as if it applied more widely to the political landscape of the Visigothic king-
dom throughout the 6th and even 7th centuries, whereas Gregory only intro-
duces the theme when referring to the successive deaths of kings Theudis
(a. 531–548), Theudegisel (a. 548–549) and Agila (a. 549–554). Gregory's
description of their violent ends lacks specific chronology, giving the impres-
sion that they were all murdered in quick succession, which was clearly not the
case. Moreover, after the death of Agila in 554 there followed a half-century in
which no Gothic monarch was assassinated – and during which time, it might
be said, several Frankish ones were. This is an example of misleading though
not necessarily prejudiced reporting on Gregory's part, whether or not he was
aware of the precise chronology of the Visigothic royal successions in the 540s,
but it is certainly not an objective depiction of that monarchy's constitutional
character.[5] Overall, Gregory may not seem as 'modern' in his historiographical
practices as, for example, Bede, in his failure to indicate his sources and to
distinguish between rumour, supposition and more firmly grounded informa-
tion. He did not know what he did not know, or sometimes how to assess the
sources at his disposal, but there is little point in condemning him for his sup-
posed failings. What we need is to know how best to evaluate his evidence.
These reservations about the reliability of some of Gregory's testimony are
hardly surprising, though not always recognized, as the limited nature of our
evidence for so many episodes and aspects of the period can induce a wishful
credulity on the part of those who study him, and his dramatic narratives are
more seductive than seemingly nit-picking source criticism.[6] The latter, how-
ever, is essential if we are to use his testimony to proper effect.

14.2   The Hermenegild Revolt

The most significant events in Spain for which Gregory's narratives consti-
tute a prime evidential source are those relating to the cause, progress and

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5   It is sometimes suggested that Gregory indulged in an anti-Gothic prejudice, but this seems
    unlikely in the light of his descriptions of personal encounters with individual Goths. Anti-Arian
    sentiment is quite different. See John Moorhead, "Gregory of Tours on the Arian Kingdoms,"
    Studi Medievali 36 (1995), 903–915, for how this may have affected his historical writing.
6   Luis Vázquez de Parga, *San Hermenegildo ante las fuentes históricas* (Madrid, 1973).

extinction of the revolt of Hermenegild, elder son of Leovigild, against his father in and around the years 578/80 to 584/5. Here, Gregory's account is the nearest we have to a contemporary source, with the sole exception of the coinage that was produced by the two parties to the conflict.[7] The next literary references after those to be found in his *Histories* come from the writings of Pope Gregory the Great (a. 590–604), who included a brief account of Hermenegild in his hagiographical *Dialogues* of 593.[8] Spanish sources for the period are closer geographically to these events, but much less so chronologically, as the main Iberian narrative is that of John of Biclarum in his Chronicle, which was probably not composed until 602 at the earliest, and reflects a view of the revolt that was inevitably influenced by intervening events, notably the conversion of the Visigothic kingdom under Hermenegild's brother Reccared (a. 586–601) and the latter's successful reign. John's account subsequently served as the main source for the presentation of these events in the *Chronicle* and the *Historia Gothorum* of Isidore of Seville (†636), both of which survive in two versions and date from ca 615 to the mid 620s.[9]

As both John and Isidore used a simple chronicle form, their narratives are explicitly dated to a much greater degree than that of Gregory of Tours, who sometimes adds chronological layers to his entries. This has meant that the chronological framework used to make sense of the events in question has generally been taken from John, with contributions from Gregory added at what appear to be the appropriate points. Not only is such an approach methodologically unsound, it ignores the uncomfortable fact that John of Biclarum's chronology is demonstrably not always reliable, even when dealing with events in Spain and of which he may have had personal knowledge.[10] On the other

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7   J.N. Hillgarth, "Coins and Chronicles: Propaganda in Sixth-Century Spain and the Byzantine Background," in *Historia* 15 (1966), 483–508; reprinted in his *Visigothic Spain, Byzantium and the Irish* (London, 1985), item II. See also Ruth Pliego Vasco, *La moneda visigoda*, 2 vols (Seville, 2009), 1: 90–95.

8   Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 3.31.1-5. It is noteworthy that Pope Gregory makes no mention of Hermenegild's revolt, conversion and death in his correspondence with the latter's brother Reccared in 587, following his rejection of Arianism.

9   *Isidori Hispalensis Chronica*, (ed.) José Carlos Martín, CCSL, vol. 112 (Turnhout, 2003); Cristóbal Rodríguez Alonso, *Las Historias de los Godos, Vándalos y Suevos de Isidoro de Sevilla. Estudio, edición crítica y traducción* (León, 1975).

10   Roger Collins, "Historical Commentary" in *Victori Tunnunnensis Chronicon cum reliquiis ex Consularibus Caesaraugustanis et Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon*, (ed.) Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, CCSL, vol. 173A (Turnhout, 2001), 95–148. The problem may derive more from the nature of the manuscript tradition of his work than from authorial error; see ibid., 13*-45* for the complex transmission.

hand, Gregory's dating of the various phases of Hermenegild's revolt is far less specific and usually has to be deduced from the way they are located in his *Histories*. However, once prized out, his chronology can, on occasion, provide an important corrective to that of the Spanish texts.

In the *Histories* Gregory describes the revolt of Hermenegild in overall outline on two separate occasions in two successive books, and in different degrees of detail.[11] This is far from being a unique case of such repetition of content in his work, though it is a particularly striking one. For example, an embassy from the Visigothic king Reccared (a. 586–601) to the Frankish monarchs Guntram and Childebert II is described twice in Book 9, but without any indication on the second occasion that it had previously been mentioned.[12] Such repetitions may indicate the lack of a final editorial revision of his text on Gregory's part.

The fifth book of the *Histories* begins with the accession of the Austrasian child king Childebert II, following the assassination of his father Sigibert I in 575, and deals with the events of his first year (ending in December 576).[13] The sixth book takes up its account at this point and concludes with the murder of Chilperic I in the Autumn of 584. The narrative of Hermenegild's revolt, which according to John of Biclar began in 578 and ended in 583/4, should properly therefore be divided between both of these books.[14] However Book 5 Chapter 38 of the *Histories*, s.a. 580, includes an overview of almost the whole episode.

Some other shorter chapters late in the fifth book hint at the much wider and more sophisticated diplomatic and military context in which these events should be located. Gregory has already indicated that embassies had been exchanged between the Visigothic and Frankish royal courts on various occasions, at least since the reign of Athanagild (554–568). These had resulted in the marriages of the Visigothic king's two daughters by his wife Goisuinth, Brunhild and Galswinth, to Sigibert I and Chilperic I respectively.[15] No dates are given for these weddings, but the betrothal of Brunhild and Sigibert clearly

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11   *Hist.* 5.38; 6.18, 29, 33, 40, 43. The discursive chapters are 5.38 and 6.43; see also 8.21 and 8.28 (s.a. 585).

12   *Hist.* 9.1 and 16.

13   Here as elsewhere, I am convinced by the arguments of A.C. Murray about the composition and organization of the *Histories,* presented in his "Chronology and the Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), 157–198 (cf. ch. 3, above).

14   *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 53, 54, 64, 65, 66, 68, 73, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 70–75.

15   The realms of these two kings are often referred to as Austrasia and Neustria respectively, but while Gregory twice mentions *Austrasii* (*Hist.* 5.14 and 18, 213 and 224), he never refers to Neustria or to Neustrians. The earliest appearance of such usages is in the Chronicle of

occurred while Athanagild was still ruling, but after the death of Chlothar I
(511–561); in other words between 561 and 568 (*Hist.* 4.27). Perhaps surprisingly,
the younger of the two Visigothic princesses, Brunhild, was the first to be mar-
ried and to the elder and more powerful of the Frankish kings. Chilperic's inter-
est in acquiring the hand of her elder sister is said by Gregory to have been
prompted by "envious emulation," but his testimony on almost anything to do
with the motivation of this king, whom he described in his obituary as "the
Nero and Herod of our day," needs to be treated with some skepticism (*Hist.*
4.28). The subsequent violent death of Galswinth at Chilperic's court, followed
by a miracle, is attributed by him to the malign influence of the king's mistress,
Fredegund, but as with much of Gregory's political narrative, a distinction
needs to be preserved between rumour and proven fact. This is especially true
of what is seen as the root cause of a great feud within the Merovingian dynasty,
subsequently said to have resulted in the deaths of ten kings.[16]

The political re-emergence in the Visigothic court of Athanagild's widow
Goisuinth, mother of the two princesses sent to Francia, through her remar-
riage to Leovigild was at variance with what became the constitutional norms
of that monarchy, which required widows of deceased kings to retire into
monastic life.[17] Such practices, however, were not institutionalized until the
later 7th century, and the arrangement between Goisuinth and Leovigild could
have been intended to assuage the worries and secure the support of those
members of the Gothic elite previously loyal to Athanagild. If so, Leovigild's
subsequent aim of marrying his elder son by his first (never named) wife to the
Frankish princess Ingund, daughter of Brunhild and Sigibert I, and thus grand-
daughter of Goisuinth, reinforced this objective.

Ingund came to Spain in 578 according to the chronology of John of
Biclarum, but Gregory's narrative implies the real date may have been one or
two years later (*Hist.* 5.38 s.a. 580). As her parents' own marriage took place in
the middle of the 560s, she can hardly have been much more than the mini-
mum age acceptable under canon law for marriage, which was fourteen.
Gregory's account of her arrival and the events that stemmed from it starts
with the claim that "a great persecution of Christians began in Spain in this
year," which from its context in Book 5 implies 580. He attributes responsibility

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Fredegar (numerous references), written no earlier than ca 660. It is thus potentially
anachronistic to refer to Neustria in a 6th-century context.

16   Fredegar 4.42; see J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Blood-feud of the Franks,' in idem, *The Long-
haired Kings and other studies in Frankish history* (London, 1962), 121–147.

17   13 Toledo (683) c. 5 and 3 Zaragoza (691) c. 5, (ed.) José Vives, *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-
romanos* (Barcelona/Madrid, 1963), 421 and 479.

for this persecution explicitly to Goisuinth, though without offering more specific detail. Gregory also reports that she lost the sight of one eye thanks to "a white cloud" that covered it, suggesting to the modern reader the presence of a cataract, but which for our author was a physical manifestation of her inner spiritual blindness.

The only instance given by Gregory of this "great persecution" in practice is in his account of the way that Goisuinth treated her recently arrived Frankish granddaughter Ingund.[18] According to Gregory's dramatic but otherwise unsubstantiated testimony, presented in the form of an invented dialogue between the two protagonists, Goisuinth tried unsuccessfully to persuade Ingund to accept a second, Arian, baptism. Faced by Ingund's firm refusal, her grandmother then resorted to physical violence, pulling her hair and kicking her. This was followed by a forced baptism of the recalcitrant princess. While often taken as literal description, this narrative might better be treated as being as allegorical as the explanation given for Goisuinth's cataract. Indeed, it is worth noting that Frankish princesses mistreated in Gothic courts because of their religion was already a theme in Gregory's work. This is said to have happened to Clovis' daughter Chlothild around 530 (*Hist.* 3.1,10), and might almost appear a necessary feature of their lives in Spain in our author's eyes. It is also worth noting both that he is the only source for Ingund's resistance, and that even so he does refer to her receiving an Arian baptism, albeit imposed on her. This, it may be assumed, was the essential pre-condition for her marriage to Hermenegild.

However enforced, Ingund's obligation to conform to Visigothic royal religious norms was a stage in the wider political process for which she had been brought to Spain. This involved Leovigild installing Hermenegild as a subordinate ruler, along with his new wife, in a city that is not named by Gregory, but was most probably Seville, and where Ingund is said to have set to work to convert her husband to Catholicism. This persuasion resulted in due course – Gregory indicates it was not a rapid process but gives no precise chronology – in his accepting a second, Catholic, baptism, in the course of which he took the baptismal name of John.[19] No mention is made of her own inconvenient second, Arian baptism. Hermenegild's conversion then prompted Leovigild to plan measures against his son, and that in turn led the latter into a diplomatic rapprochement with the emperor, who is not here named, but was actually

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18   *PLRE* 3: Ingund 2, 620–621.

19   For the significance of the chronological imprecision over the dating of the conversion in particular, see Roger Collins, "Mérida and Toledo, 550–585," in *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches,* (ed.) Edward James (Oxford, 1980), 189–219.

Tiberius II (a. 576–582). We might be tempted to wonder if the order should not be reversed: it was the approach to the Byzantines that worried Leovigild more about his son's conduct than the conversion.

Gregory then mentions an imperial prefect, who is described as commanding an army that was "attacking Spain." With hindsight we would recognize this as a reference to the Byzantine enclave in the South-East of the Iberian peninsula, centred on Cartagena, which had been established back in 551/2. Since that time an endemic state of war had existed between the Gothic kingdom and this imperial foothold in the Iberian Peninsula, which would eventually be extinguished around 625.[20] However, Gregory's actual comment suggests he was unaware of the fact that this enclave had already been in existence for over three decades, and his few words on the Byzantine involvement in Hermenegild's revolt indicate that his knowledge of the imperial presence in Spain was extremely hazy and imprecise.

His poor understanding of the situation is confirmed by a story in his *Gloria Confessorum*, the setting for which is given as the war between Leovigild and Hermenegild (*GC* 12). As the geographical location for the miraculous episode is said to be a monastery dedicated to Saint Martin in the region between Sagunto (*Saguntum*) and Cartagena (*Carthago Nova*), which is far removed from Hermenegild's field of operations in *Baetica* but instead lies at the heart of the imperial enclave, it is clear that the actual context was the war between Leovigild and the Byzantines in the late 560s and earlier 570s. More precisely, the account of this war given by John of Biclarum might suggest a date of 569.[21] Gregory, however, was unaware of this earlier and more general conflict.

To return to his overall narrative of the revolt in *Hist.* 5.38: on the failure of negotiations between father and son, which are dramatically represented by Gregory as a request on the part of Leovigild that his son come to meet him to discuss their differences, followed by the refusal of the latter on the grounds that he was a Catholic and thus the king's enemy, the Visigothic ruler tried to bribe this imperial prefect with "thirty thousand solidi," a doubtless symbolic number, not to assist the rebel. Hermenegild, facing the threat of imminent military action by his father then called on his imperial allies for assistance, only to be betrayed by them in a manner unspecified, and forced to seek sanctuary in a church. His brother Reccared was sent to coax him out, promising he

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20   See Jaime Vizcaino Sánchez, *La presencia bizantina en 'Hispania' (siglos* VI–VII*): La documentación arqueológica* (Murcia, 2009), and Danielle Donaldson, *Studies in the Material, Political and Cultural Impact of the Byzantine Presence in Early Medieval Spain c. 550–711*, PhD dissertation (University of Cambridge, 2012).

21   *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 12, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 62.

would retain his rank and honours, but Leovigild subsequently broke this agreement, apparently made on oath, once Hermenegild had submitted and had accompanied his father back to Toledo. His royal robes were taken from him and he was sent into exile in a location unnamed by Gregory, with only one servant.

A number of key features can be identified in this, the first of Gregory's accounts of the revolt. Strikingly, no explicit chronology is given for the relatively complex and extended sequence of events described. Although supposedly part of a wider persecution of which no other details are given, Gregory's narrative is exclusively focused on a conflict of allegiances within the royal family, precipitated by the arrival of the Frankish Catholic princess, Ingund, who was also descended from the previous Visigothic ruling dynasty. Hermenegild's conversion was, according to Gregory, entirely the personal responsibility of Ingund.[22] He also makes no reference to any significant military rather than diplomatic activity: Hermenegild relies on imperial support that is not forthcoming and, once deprived of it, proves unable to offer resistance to his father. No mention is made of what becomes of Ingund after her husband's surrender, or of the birth of their son Athanagild, topics that were of central relevance to Visigothic-Frankish and Frankish-imperial diplomatic exchanges in the years 585 to 587.[23] Gregory is here equally silent on Hermenegild's own fate beyond his exile. It is possible that this account of the revolt was composed by him before he knew of the prince's murder or execution, in other words in the winter of 584/5, but this is unlikely.[24]

As already mentioned, the nearest to a contemporary Spanish account is that of John of Biclarum, bishop of Gerona, written almost twenty years later. John structured his chronicle by means of combined imperial and Gothic regnal years. Thus, the third year of the reign of the emperor Tiberius is for him also the eleventh of Leovigild.[25] If such regnal years began with the precise

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22   Perhaps unsurprisingly, Isidore highlights instead the role of his elder brother Leander, his predecessor as bishop of Seville; but this is a perspective fully endorsed by Gregory the Great, who had met Leander in Constantinople ca 582/3, in his *Dialogi* 3.31.1, (ed.) Adalbert de Vogüé, *Grégoire le Grand, Dialogues*, vol. 2, Sources Chrétiennes, vol. 260 (Paris, 1979), 384.

23   *Hist.* 8.18, 21, 28; 9.20. See also *Il "Liber epistolarum' della cancelleria austrasica (sec.* V–VI*),"* (ed.) Elena Malaspina (Rome, 2001), *epp.* 27–28 for letters sent to the infant Athanagild, by then in Constantinople, and who is hailed as *gloriosus rex*, by his grandmother Brunhild and uncle Childebert II.

24   Accepting Murray's arguments for a single process of composition of *Hist.* in the form we have it; see n. 13 above.

25   *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 52, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 70.

date of each ruler's accession, then the imperial and royal dates would soon cease to be synchronous. However, John keeps them in tandem by making the royal dates match the imperial ones. Thus the fourth year of the imperial reign of Maurice is also the eighteenth and last of that of Leovigild. However the latter's son Reccared's first year as king does not start with the death of his father but is made to equate to the fifth year of Maurice. In other words, its start is artificially delayed until the imperial year changes. From this preference for imperial dating, it is possible to deduce the AD date implied for each of his chronicle entries. In the case of the year in which the revolt of Hermenegild began, the logic of his structure would make it AD 578.

According to John, this year saw the arrival of an unnamed Frankish princess, daughter of Sigibert, to marry Hermenegild; then the latter's establishment by his father as ruler in Seville, and also the start of his revolt. This is here said to be "factione Gosuinthae regine," a regrettably ambiguous phrase that has been subject to several alternative interpretations.[26] These often draw upon Gregory's story of Goisuinth's ill-treatment of Ingund, but since John was certainly entirely unaware of what the Frankish bishop had written, it is methodologically unsound to interpret his statement in the light of anything that he himself did not say.

The next chronicle entry that relates to the revolt forms part of the annal assigned to the sixth year of the reign of Tiberius II and the fourteenth of that of Leovigild (=AD 581). It just states that the Visigothic king gathered an army "to fight his son." The following year, the first of the reign of the emperor Maurice and fifteenth of Leovigild (AD 582), saw the start of the siege of Seville. This was brought to a successful conclusion in the second year of Maurice and sixteenth of Leovigild (AD 583), who also captured his rebel son in Córdoba and sent him into exile in Valencia. Hermenegild was "killed by Sisbert in Tarragona" the year after that (AD 584).[27] It should be noted that at no point does John, who calls him a *tyrannus* or usurper, make any mention of Hermenegild converting to Catholicism.[28] In this, as in his general outline narrative of events, he was followed by Isidore of Seville.

There are clear discrepancies in the dating offered by Gregory on the one hand and John, more explicitly, on the other. John places the opening phases of these events – the marriage, creation of the sub-kingdom based on Seville, and Hermenegild's revolt – in 578. Gregory locates at least the first two of them in 580.

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26 *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 54, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 71; Collins, 'Historical Commentary,' 129–130.

27 *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 73, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 73–75.

28 See Collins, "Historical Commentary," 133–135.

John then has a pause of two to three years before Leovigild starts to take action, in 581. Two years of campaigning follow, in 582 and 583, with Hermenegild taken prisoner in the latter, and killed by the mysterious Sisbert in Tarragona in 584. Gregory's omission of specific military activity makes it harder to pin down his dates, but in Book 6 (*Hist*. 6.18 s.a. 582) he gives the evidence of the Frankish envoys Ansovald and Domigisel that during their negotiations for the marriage of Rigunth, daughter of Chilperic and Fredegund, to Leovigild's second son Reccared, the Visigothic king had been absent from his capital (Toledo) on campaign and had captured Mérida.[29] This embassy falls under 582. Gregory does not include any mention of the deaths of both Ingund and Hermenegild until Book 8 (*Hist*. 8.28 s.a. 585), which deals with events in the years 585. At the very least it is clear that knowledge of their fates had not reached Francia at the time that Chilperic's daughter Rigunth set out on her ultimately abortive journey to Spain some time in August or September of 584. While exact equivalents are not always available, it seems that John's dating and that of Gregory are usually one year out of synchronism, and sometimes, as in the start of these events, as many as two.

In matters of interpretation, Gregory differs markedly from John in the motivation suggested for the revolt, including both the roles played by Goisuinth and Ingund, and in the significance accorded to imperial involvement. John gives no hint of the latter, although mentioning Suevic involvement on the side of Leovigild against his son. This is contradicted by what Gregory says in Book 6 – a conflict of evidence that will be discussed below.[30] Gregory's very plausible presentation of the rebel prince's attempted alliance with "the emperor's prefect," and Leovigild's seemingly successful bribe to prevent it places the whole episode in a wider context that generally also makes sense of the ordering of events as described by John of Biclarum.

It may be asked why we should place greater faith in Gregory's chronology, if not all of his interpretations, than in that of John, especially when the latter's is more detailed and specific? John's errors of dating, however, can be detected throughout his chronicle. More significantly, though, not only is Gregory much closer in time of writing to the events described, but also it is often possible to deduce exactly how he received his information, even if his own idiosyncratic interests influenced some of his reporting of it. The key to this is the existence of numerous diplomatic missions between Frankish and Spanish courts in the years in question, and in particular the way that several of them passed through Tours and provided Gregory with first hand accounts from the ambassadors concerned.

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29   *Hist*. 6.18.
30   Collins, "Historical Commentary," 134.

Books 5 and 6 of the *Histories* include several mentions of such exchanges of embassies between both the Visigothic and the Suevic kingdoms in Spain and the three rival Frankish courts. The earliest of these missions was sent by Queen Brunhild to Leovigild and was led by Bishop Elafius of Châlons, who died of a fever in the course of it (*Hist.* 5.40 s.a. 580). Gregory seems more concerned with the death of the bishop than with the specific purpose of his diplomatic mission, which he does not record. His reference to it appears close upon the one just described that gives a synoptic view of Hermenegild's revolt (*Hist.* 5.38 s.a. 580), but its date cannot be determined. This and the diplomatic exchanges that follow can only be assumed to belong to the period of the revolt, but probably before Leovigild launched his military campaign against Hermenegild in 582.[31] Next, the chapter that follows the one noting the death of bishop Elafius records how Suevic ambassadors, on their way to King Guntram in Burgundy, were imprisoned by Chilperic in Paris for a year (*Hist.* 5.41 s.a. 580), an episode that will be examined in more detail below. Finally in Book 5, Gregory gives a long account of a theological debate between himself and an envoy from Leovigild, who passed through Tours on the way to see Chilperic (*Hist.* 5.43 s.a. 580).

The diplomatic pace increases in Book 6, with references to several more diplomatic exchanges between Frankish and Gothic courts. Possibly, some of these separate notices, appearing in different chapters, may relate to the same embassy, though this is unlikely. Firstly, Gregory records the passing through Tours in 582 of the Frankish ambassadors Ansovald and Domigisel, who were returning from Spain to the court of Chilperic, having been sent to inspect the dowry offered for the marriage of the king's daughter Rigunth to Leovigild's second son, Reccared (*Hist.* 6.18). Gregory asked them about the treatment of Catholics in Spain and was told by Ansovald that King Leovigild "was deceitfully praying at the tombs of the martyrs" and had accepted the equality of Father and Son in the Trinity, while continuing to deny that of the Holy Spirit. This may well relate to the synod of Arian bishops held in Toledo in 579, described by John of Biclarum, in which "ancient heresy was emended into new error." This involved a new and more acceptable form of reception for Catholics converting to Arianism, in which they would no longer have to undergo a second baptism, but merely the imposition of hands prior to their first communion, and the use of a modified form of the *Gloria*: "Glory to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit."[32] Ansovald and Domigisel must also

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31   As dated comparatively by John of Biclarum: *Chronicon* 68, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 74.

32   *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 57, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 72, and 'Historical Commentary,' 130–131.

be the most likely sources for Gregory's account in this same chapter of how Hermenegild had formed an alliance with the generals of the emperor Tiberius and also of Leovigild's recent capture of Mérida.

Two later chapters in Book 6 may contain information deriving either from this same embassy or from another one that passed through Tours in the year of 583. It is not possible to construct from Gregory's narratives a clear picture of the number, purpose and direction of even just the diplomatic missions that he mentions. For example, in the *De Virtutibus Sancti Martini* Gregory records a miracle effected by Saint Martin about which he heard from envoys coming from Spain to the court of Chilperic; their names were Florentius and Exsuperius (*VM* 3.8). Neither of these men appear in the *Histories*, but they are clearly described as being ambassadors from the Goths. So, this is another embassy, whose diplomatic purpose is not described, which also has to be fitted into the complex pattern of exchanges in the years from 578 to 584, but with no better clues as to a more precise location. However, it does seem that most of Gregory's information on events in Spain in 583 comes explicitly from Frankish envoys returning home rather than from Gothic ones traveling in Francia.

In Book 6 (*Hist.* 6.29 s.a. 583), Frankish envoys are described as returning home having failed to see Leovigild, because he was absent, conducting a campaign against his son Hermenegild. This could well refer to the embassy of Ansovald and Domigisel, previously discussed, except for the fact that Gregory's account in *Hist.* 6.18 might suggest that, while they were held up by his absence on campaign, they may eventually have met the Gothic king. Next, in *Hist.* 6.33 s.a. 584 Frankish envoys are said to have brought back news about the war then raging in Spain and also about a plague of locusts in *Carpetania*.

Diplomatic missions from Spain to the court of Chilperic are also recorded at various points in Books 5 and 6. One is the embassy led by Agilan, who debated Trinitarian theology with Gregory while passing through Tours (*Hist.* 5.43 s.a. 580).

Another, led by a certain Oppila, passed through Tours during Easter (April 2) of 584. This embassy is described as bringing gifts to Chilperic because Leovigild was anxious to prevent Childebert II invading the Gothic kingdom to avenge the treatment of his sister Ingund, who was now in the hands of the Byzantines (*Hist.* 6.40). Oppila also had a theological debate with Gregory, which he describes in some detail. They apparently agreed on all points except for the *Gloria*, the liturgical invocation of glory to the three persons of the Trinity. It is reasonable to assume that the Gothic envoy used the formula adopted by the Arian synod of Toledo of 579. This derived from the theological position attributed to Leovigild elsewhere in Book 6, of accepting the equality of Father and Son, while still denying that of the Holy Spirit (*Hist.* 6.18).

It is worth noting that Gregory was more concerned to describe the theological discussion he conducted with the envoy than to discover – or at least to include in his narrative – details of the events unfolding in the Iberian Peninsula, on which his interlocutor would have been well informed. In general, in addition to the constraints imposed by his own personal interests, Gregory's knowledge of Spanish affairs was almost entirely dependent upon this rather frequent flow of ambassadors passing through Tours. His information was further restricted by the fact that almost all such embassies were in transit to or from the court of his sovereign at the time, Chilperic. Naturally enough, envoys sent to or by the other Frankish courts rarely came his way. This dependence is best illustrated by the fact that, following the dismemberment of Chilperic's kingdom and the short-lived acquisition of Tours by Guntram (late 584 to early 585), Gregory becomes much less informative on Spanish matters, other than for some general observations, and is almost entirely silent on them after 587.[33] Thus, while he gives a dramatized account of the meeting between Arian and Catholic bishops following the conversion of Reccared in that year, he makes no mention of the Third Council of Toledo in 589 that formalized the abolition of the Arian church in Spain.[34] This is particularly regrettable, as our Spanish sources for the period are very limited.

Another significant feature of Gregory's reliance on information gleaned from envoys to and from Chilperic passing through Tours is that their Spanish connections were exclusively with the court of Leovigild. We do not hear of ambassadors coming from or going to that of Hermenegild, though it is hard to believe they did not exist. All such are likely to have had the Austrasian court of the young Childebert II and his mother Brunhild, the brother and mother of Hermenegild's wife Ingund, as their Frankish focus. This is important as it affects the degree of credence to be afforded Gregory's few nuggets of information on the revolt. Thus, his claim that Ingund was responsible for the conversion of her husband can only rest on rumour at best, as none of the ambassadors to whom he spoke ever attended the court of Hermenegild or had visited Seville.

In *Hist.* 6.43 s.a. 584, Gregory gives another synoptic but partial account of the revolt of Hermenegild, who is said to be residing in "a certain city of Spain" and awaiting the arrival of military support from both the emperor and from

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33   *Hist.* 9.15 is the last mention of events in Spain (Reccared's personal conversion in 587), and 9.28 s.a 589 the final reference to diplomatic exchanges.

34   The Arian-Catholic synod of 587 is also mentioned by John of Biclarum: *Chronicon* 84, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 78; see also Roger Collins, 'King Leovigild and the Conversion of the Goths,' in idem, *Law, Culture and Regionalism in Early Medieval Spain* (Aldershot and Brookfield Vermont, 1992), item II.

the Suevic king Miro. At the approach of his father, he placed three hundred men in the fortress of Osser, which Gregory had already described as the site of a church with a miraculous spring (*Hist*. 5.17) that also features in Book 10 of the *Histories* (*Hist*. 10.23) and in one of his hagiographic works (*GM* 23). This was captured by Leovigild, who then forced king Miro of the Sueves to take an oath of loyalty to him, sealed by an exchange of gifts. The Suevic monarch then withdrew from the conflict back to his own kingdom, where he died soon afterwards. Gregory then includes an account of how Miro's son Euric took the same oath of obedience to the Gothic king, only to be overthrown by his brother-in-law Audeca and forced to take holy orders as a deacon. Audeca seized the throne, marrying the widow of Miro. Gregory concludes the chapter with Leovigild taking Hermenegild as a captive to Toledo but failing to persuade the Byzantines to hand over Ingund, who it is implied had taken refuge with them. No mention is made of Hermenegild's ultimate fate until Book 8, which relates to events in 585, where it is included along with news of the death of Ingund in Africa, while *en route* to Constantinople.[35]

This chapter (*Hist*. 6.43) is as confusing as the forgoing summary implies. The introduction of the narrative of the short-lived garrisoning of Osser leads directly, but without obvious relationship, to Miro's submission to Hermenegild. The extension of this into a brief account of the political upheavals in the Suevic kingdom in the months or year(s) that follow makes it impossible to know if Miro's capitulation preceded or was caused by Leovigild's capture of Hermenegild. It is possible that Gregory is conflating information about the miraculous spring at Osser, which seems to have interested him greatly and which may have derived from a single source, although distributed around various parts of his literary oeuvre, with details from another informant particularly relating to events in the Suevic kingdom, although set in the wider context of Hermenegild's revolt.[36] A passing Suevic embassy, like the one detained by Chilperic in Poitiers in 580 (*Hist*. 5.41), is a candidate for Gregory's source here, as a Gothic one might have been expected to be more interested in other features of the suppression of the revolt.

In his *Historia Sueborum*, Isidore, following John of Biclarum, gives a rather different account of the Suevic involvement in the revolt of Hermenegild, claiming that Miro led an army to assist Leovigild, not his rebel son, in the siege

35   *Hist*. 8.28: Gregory just reports that he was killed by his father Leovigild. John of Biclarum
        has him killed in Tarragona in 584 by an otherwise unknown Sisbert, who himself suffered
        morte turpissima in 586: *Chronicon* 73 and 83, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 75 and 77.

36   On the miraculous spring see *Hist*. 5.17, 6.43, 10.23; GM 23–24 and 68.

of Seville, and then died there.[37] He then records how Miro's young (*adulescens*) son and successor Eboric was overthrown by Audeca and tonsured as a monk.[38] Audeca was in turn deposed and forced into holy orders when Leovigild conquered the Suevic kingdom, an event not mentioned by Gregory. While Isidore provides no chronology, John of Biclarum separates out the various stages, with Miro coming to the aid of Leovigild in the siege of Seville in the fifteenth year of the latter's reign, which for him was also the first year of that of the emperor Maurice (582).[39] The next year (583) saw the usurpation of Audeca, and also the fall of Seville and Hermenegild's subsequent capture in Córdoba. The third year of Maurice and seventeenth of Leovigild (584) included the Gothic conquest of the Suevic kingdom, and also the killing of Hermenegild by Sisbert in Tarragona.[40]

Not only was Gregory closer in time to these events, but a further detail in his *Histories* may help confirm that his was probably the correct description. In Book 5 (*Hist.* 5.41 s.a. 580) he mentions the detention of a Suevic embassy heading to the court of the Frankish king Guntram by the latter's brother Chilperic. They were held captive for a year before being released. This is the only evidence we have of Suevic diplomacy from this period, but there is no need to assume this was the only example of it. It is significant, both that the intended destination of the ambassadors was the court of Guntram, whom later events show to be the most persistently hostile of the Frankish kings to the Visigothic monarchy, and that they were prevented from getting there by Chilperic, whose own diplomatic links with Leovigild were surprisingly friendly. The implication is that the Sueves were hoping to interest Guntram in intervening in Spain, no doubt to further his own territorial ambitions, and their hope for an alliance with him can only be seen as aimed against Leovigild, whether or not specifically in support of Hermenegild. So, Gregory's account

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37   *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 65, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 73; Isidore, *Historia* (both versions) 91, (ed.) Rodríguez Alonso, 319–320.

38   Ibid. 92, 320–321. No mention is made of Audeca's relationship to Eboric in the Spanish texts, but his marriage to Miro's widow, Sisegunth, is confirmed by John of Biclarum: *Chronicon* 67, (ed.) cit., 74. See Pablo C. Díaz, *El reino suevo (411–585)* (Madrid, 2011), 138–152.

39   *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 65, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 73. John's chronology is a year out of synchronization with that implied by Gregory from this point. As the contents of his Chapter 65 contain all the events he assigns to the year I Maurice/xv Leovigild (=582), it may be that an error has occurred here in the distribution of chronicle entries between years.

40   *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 72–73, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 75.

of Miro's intervention on the side of Hermenegild is more credible than John of Biclarum and Isidore's claims that he was coming to aid Leovigild.

Book 7 of the *Histories*, which opens with the immediate aftermath of the murder of Chilperic in 584, only includes one chapter with a Spanish connection, though the action is confined to Francia. This describes what should have been the climax of some of the diplomatic negotiations featured in the preceding two books, which had been aimed at a marriage alliance between the families of Chilperic and Leovigild. The Frankish princess Rigunth, daughter of Chilperic and Fredegund, was probably in her mid-teens when sent to Spain. She set out for her intended marriage to Leovigild's younger son and now sole heir, Reccared, accompanied by a large entourage and military escort, but she had only reached Toulouse at the time her father was murdered. Gregory reports how her escort abandoned her and her substantial dowry was seized by Duke Desiderius, who was in the process of switching allegiance from the court of Chilperic, now headed by his widow Fredegund, to that of the usurper Gundovald in the realignment of loyalties that followed that assassination (*Hist.* 7.9). She remained in sanctuary in the church of St. Mary in Toulouse until rescued and returned to her mother, with whom, according to Gregory, she thereafter enjoyed a tempestuous relationship.[41]

The rapid eclipse of the dynasty of Chilperic, to which the treatment of Rigunth is testimony, led to the territorial redistribution that included the transfer of Tours and its bishop to the authority of king Guntram and then, in early 585, to that of Childebert II. It also led to a diplomatic realignment, with Visigothic royal interest moving away from the much diminished court of Chilperic's young heir, Chlothar II (a. 584–629), to that of Childebert II and his mother Brunhild.[42] In consequence, most of what Gregory has to say about Franco-Gothic relations in Books 8 and 9 of the Histories describes them from a changed perspective. While there are still references to diplomatic missions, none involve the personal encounters in Tours described in earlier books.[43] Probably in consequence, rather less is said about events in Spain, as opposed to the Visigothic territory north of the Pyrenees, the province of *Narbonensis*.[44]

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41   *Hist.* 7.39, and 9.34. PLRE 3: Rigunthis, 1087–1088. Nothing more is recorded of her later life. Gregory's account of Fredegund's attempt to kill her should be treated with reserve.

42   *Hist.* 8.28: a last and rather improbable story of contact between Leovigild and Chlothar's mother Fredegund; 9.1,17,28: exchanges of embassies between Reccared and the court of Childebert II and Brunhild.

43   *Hist.* 8.35, 38, 43 and 45; 9.16, 20 and 28.

44   *Hist.* 8.35: the plundering of Gallic ships (from Marseilles[?] *en route* to Britain?) and the capture or killing of their crews in Galicia; 8.46: death of Leovigild, but with no details other than the rumour of his repentance; 9.1: Reccared being reconciled with Goisuinth

This was the target of Guntram's expansionary ambitions in 585, though cloaked in the pretext of seeking vengeance for Ingund, recently dead in Africa, and her murdered or executed husband, Hermenegild. Both Gregory and John of Biclarum concur in describing the Frankish king's military ventures as ill-fated, while differing in descriptive details.[45]

While Hispanic affairs take up very little space in Gregory of Tours' monumental *Ten Books of Histories* or in his several individually much shorter hagiographic writings, an investigation of the nature and limits of his knowledge of what was happening beyond the Pyrenees is not only intrinsically valuable, as he was one of our all too rare sources for the events he describes, but it also provides a good if small-scale example of the scope and consequences of his wider methodology and interests. By exploring the perimeters of whis views on events taking place in Spain, it is possible to understand the precise significance as well as the limitations of his evidence.

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and recognizing her as "his mother"; for her subsequent fate see *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 89, (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 79.

45   *Hist.* 8.28 and 45; *Iohannis Biclarensis Chronicon* 74 (for year 584, *recte* 585), (ed.) Cardelle de Hartmann, 76.

PART 6

Post Mortem

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The Early Medieval Editions of Gregory of Tours' *Histories*

Helmut Reimitz

15.1   Introduction: Gregory's Last Wish and His Future as Author, Actor, and Authority

Gregory concluded his *Histories* in a dramatic manner. The last chapter of his *Decem libri historiarum* ends his history of late antique Gaul in the 21st year of his own episcopate as bishop of Tours. He ends the last chapter with a comprehensive *liber pontificalis* of the bishops of Tours, most of whom Gregory had presented as members of his own family in the preceding ten books.[1] He goes on to list all of his writings and makes a dramatic appeal to his successors to keep his work unchanged and intact:

> I conjure you by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by Judgement Day feared by all sinners, that you never permit these books to be destroyed or rewritten – by selecting them only in part or by omitting sections – otherwise you will be left in confusion by the Last Judgement and be condemned with the Devil. Rather, keep them in your possession, intact and unchanged, just as I have left them.[2]

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1   Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. C. Caroll (Cambridge, 2001), 7–23.

2   *Hist.* 10.31. Also see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 94–101.

As he did so often in the preceding ten books, Gregory looked into the future at the very end of the narrative.[3] In doing so he brought together the different *personae* he had constructed for himself in the preceding narrative as *actor*, *auctor* and *auctoritas*: the author of the narrative and actor within the narrative whose interaction allowed him to present himself as one of the most eminent religious and pastoral authorities of his time. In each of these roles, he fulfilled his spiritual responsibility to remind the members of his society again and again to be aware of the coming end. But his *Histories* (intact and unchanged, as he had left them) were not only intended to remind his contemporaries about the approaching end of the world – they were also intended to guide present and future members of his society towards this end.[4]

Gregory's dramatic appeal at the end of his *Histories* did not, however, prevent later generations from reworking his text. Indeed, Gregory, who had also presented himself in the role of a prophet, anticipated with these words how later historians and compilers would deal with his historiographical legacy.[5] Within a generation after Gregory's death in 594, Merovingian compilers produced a six-book version, omitting the last four books, which cover the history of Gaul following the death of Chilperic I in 584. But it was not only these last four books that were omitted in this later version. In the first six books, too, a series of chapters were left out that were crucial elements in Gregory's history of the formation of the specific spiritual topography of Christian Gaul.

The five extant manuscripts (an unusually high number) of the six-book version from the time around 700 indicate that it was widely read in the Merovingian period. The text that Gregory had wanted to be kept intact and unchanged is only extant in some fragments from the Merovingian period.[6] But later manuscripts from the Carolingian period, which included all ten books, show that the original version was still available when Carolingian

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3   For eschatology in Gregory's *Histories*, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 153–192.

4   Peter Brown, "From *amator patriae* to *amator pauperum* and Back Again," in *Cultures in Motion*, (eds.) Daniel T. Rodgers, Bhavani Raman, and Helmut Reimitz (Princeton, 2013), 87–106; and idem, "Gregory of Tours. Introduction," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2002), 1–28.

5   For Gregory's self-stylization as a prophet see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 41–48.

6   These are fragments from the first half of the 7th century grouped as A2 in the edition of Bruno Krusch: Copenhagen, Bibl. Reg, "Ny Kgl. Saml" 1878, fol. U 8; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 21, fols. 1–2; Vatican, Regin. Lat. 689 bis fols. 322–325; cf. CLA X, nr. **107; Martin Heinzelmann and Pascale Bourgain, "L'œuvre de Grégoire de Tours. La diffusion des manuscrits," in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois*, (eds.) Nancy Gauthier and Henri Galinié, 13e supplement à la Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France (Tours, 1997), 273–317, here 278.

scribes and scholars produced their own version of the *Histories*. Although they worked with a complete version of the text and provided a narrative that covered all ten books, the Carolingian compilers' equally selective use of the *Histories* was still far from how Gregory had wished his text to be read and copied.[7] It is only from around the year 900 onward that we have extant manuscripts with (nearly) complete versions of Gregory's *Histories*. The manuscript that the editors of the *Histories* regard as the 'best' transmission (in regard to the completeness of the text) dates from the late 11th century.[8]

Nevertheless, these manuscripts show that in spite of the various transmissions of the text, the 'complete' *Histories* were available throughout the centuries. In 1027 Fulbert of Chartres had to explain to his king, Robert II, the meaning of a 'blood rain,' the common term for the natural phenomenon that occurred when European rain mingled with sand transported from the Sahara Desert by southern winds. To elucidate its meaning Fulbert referred to a story from Gregory's *Histories*.[9] His quotation from Book 6, Chapter 14 shows that he must have used a copy that was fairly close to the text that Gregory had actually written.[10] Fulbert held Gregory's *Histories* in high regard. The king had asked the intellectuals of his kingdom to search for similar occurrences "in quibusdam historiis." Fulbert's reply consisted of a number of extracts from different works, but he recommended especially fervently the passage from Gregory. He would send more information later, but because of the urgency of the request he had first looked to Gregory "propter auctoritatem religionis suae."[11]

Yet, Gregory's authority could also be an inconvenience. About 200 years before Fulbert wrote his letter to the king, Hilduin, the abbot of Saint Denis and former archchaplain responded to a request of his emperor, Louis the Pious. Louis had asked him to write the life and *passio* of Saint Denis, the saint whose support had been so important for himself as well as his ancestors and royal and imperial predecessors. Hilduin, said Louis, should use all the

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7   See below, Sect. 2.

8   Montecassino Ms. Lat. 275 copied under Abbot Desiderius, cf. Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'œuvre," 277.

9   Fulbert of Chartres, *The Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres*, (ed.) and trans. Frederick Behrends (Oxford, 1976), 224–225, 274–275; and the comments of Karl-Ferdinand Werner, "Gott, Herrscher, und Historiograph: Der Geschichtsschreiber als Interpret des Wirkens Gottes in der Welt und Ratgeber der Könige (4.-12. Jahrhundert)," in *Deus qui mutat tempora: Menschen und Institutionen im Wandel des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Alfons Becker*, (eds.) idem and Ernst-Dieter Hehl (Sigmaringen, 1987), 1–31, here 28.

10   Fulbert of Chartres, *Letters*, (eds.) and trans. Behrends, 224.

11   Fulbert of Chartres, *Letters*, (ed.) and trans. Berhrends, 275.

materials he could find: charters, histories, hagiography including translations of the Greek works of the saint himself.[12] The Greek works the emperor referred to were the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite, which he had recently obtained as a present from the Byzantine emperor.[13] Louis, like many of his contemporaries, believed that they were the works of Dionysius Areopagita, a pupil of the apostle Paul mentioned in Acts 17:34. Hilduin's was tasked to demonstrate with the new *passio* that the Parisian Saint Denis was no other than the Apostle's pupil.[14]

Hilduin's answer shows that one of the greatest obstacles for identifying Saint Denis with Dionysius Areopagita was the authority of Gregory of Tours. Saint Denis played an important role in Gregory's history of the origins of Christian Gaul. He was one of the *septem viri* who came from Rome to preach in Gaul and thus stands at the beginning of Gregory's Christendom in Gaul. But Gregory also dates the mission of the *septem viri* to the reign of the emperor Decius (a. 249–251). This, of course, made it difficult to reconcile the claim that the Dionysius who suffered his martyrdom in Paris was the same as the Dionysius who is mentioned in Acts as the pupil of the apostle Paul. It seems that there was already a debate at court when Hilduin wrote his letter to the emperor and some of the doubts that were raised against the identification of

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12   *Epistolae variorum inde a morte Caroli magni usque ad divisionem imperii collectae 19*, (ed.) Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epist. 5 (Hanover, 1899), 299–360, here 325–327.

13   On Dionysius the Areopagite, whose 6th-century text indeed used the name and identity of the pupil of Saint Paul, see Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to their Influence* (New York, 1993); Sarah Coakley and Charles M. Stang, eds, *Rethinking Dionysius the Areopagite* (Oxford, 2008); Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus: Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts*, Mittelalter-Forschungen 25 (Ostfildern, 2008), 246–248.

14   Raymond Loenertz, "La légende parisienne de S. Denys l'aréopagite: Sa genèse et son premier témoin," *Analecta Bollandiana* 69 (1951), 217–237; Giles Brown, *Politics and Patronage at the Abbey of Saint-Denis: The Rise of a Royal Patron Saint*, unpubl. PhD dissertation (Oxford 1989), 217–282; David Luscombe, "Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite in the Middle Ages: From Hilduin to Lorenzo Valla," in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter* 1, (ed.) Horst Fuhrmann, MGH Schriften 33.1 (Hanover, 1988), 1: 133–152; Max Buchner, "Die Areopagitika des Abtes Hilduin von St. Denis und ihr kirchenpolitischer Hintergrund: Studien zur Gleichsetzung Dionysius' des Areopagiten mit dem heiligen Dionysius von Paris sowie zur Fälschungstechnik am Vorabend der Entstehung der Pseudoisidorischen Dekretalien," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 56 (1936), 441–480; 57 (1937), 31–60; 58 (1938), 55–96, 361–403; 59 (1939), 69–117; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship," in *The Past as Text*, (ed.) eadem (Baltimore 1997), 138–162; Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, 2013), 172–173; 232–233.

the Parisian Saint Denis with the Areopagite were obviously based on Gregory's account in his *Histories*. Hilduin's response was that one should not believe everything the bishop of Tours had written. The *vir religiosus* Gregory, Hilduin states, had committed many things to writing which he had only thought to be true. But Hilduin was careful not to criticize Gregory too harshly. The bishop of Tours had never written to willfully deceive his readers. The reason for inaccuracies in his *Histories* had rather been his *benignitas* and *simplicitas*.[15]

Hilduin's critique of Gregory's *Histories* reminds us of the caveats of many modern historians – from Bruno Krusch who emphasized the "Unzuverlässigkeit der Geschichtsschreibung Gregors von Tours" (the unreliability of Gregory's historical writings), to more recent works exploring the "secret histories" and "literary trickery" of Gregory of Tours.[16] In this regard, Hilduin's comments seem to be in line with recent academic historians who understand Gregory's benign *simplicitas* as more than just the simplemindedness of a naïve "Historienmaler."[17] Hilduin – again like many modern scholars – suggested looking more carefully at other sources and texts written in Gregory's time and comparing them with Gregory's account. For his own question about Saint Denis, he found the writings of Gregory's contemporary, the *vir prudens and scolasticissimus* Venantius Fortunatus, particularly important and helpful.[18] Hilduin referred to a hymn on Saint Denis written by Fortunatus that dated the mission of the Parisian martyr and missionary to Gaul to the time of Pope Clement I (a. 97–101). Although Hilduin could not find anything about the nation and ordination of Dionysius

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15   *Epistolae Variorum* 20, (ed.) Dümmler, 327–335, here 333.

16   Bruno Krusch, "Die Unzuverlässigkeit der Geschichtsschreibung Gregors von Tours," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 45 (1933), 486–490; Ian Wood, "The Secret Histories of Gregory of Tours," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 71 (1993), 253–270; on trickery see Brown, "Gregory of Tours," 19–28. For an overview of the historiography on Gregory, see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 1–6, with particular reference to the breakthrough that the work of Walter Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History* (AD 550–800): *Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2005) marks, and see Patzold in the appendix to the eighth edition of Rudolf Buchner's German translation and edition of the *Decem Libri Historiarum*, 2 vols, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 2, (Darmstadt, 2000); and most recently Alexander Callander Murray, "Chronology and Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," in *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1/1 (2008), 157–96.

17   See Rudolf Buchner in the introduction to his German translation, *Zehn Bücher Geschichten*, 2: xx.

18   On Venantius Fortunatus, see Michael Roberts, *The Humblest Sparrow: The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus* (Ann Arbor, 2009); Judith W. George, *Venantius Fortunatus: A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul* (Oxford, 1992).

in Fortunatus' hymn, the poet had at least mentioned that the saint was fluent in the Greek language.[19] Not surprisingly, Hilduin regarded the evidence from Fortunatus as more accurate than Gregory's. In emphasizing the close connections between Gregory and Fortunatus, Hilduin also hinted at the fact that Gregory could have (and should have) known better. After all, as Hilduin observed, Fortunatus had often sent many of his writings – "plura et frequenter" – to the bishop of Tours.[20]

The two examples of Fulbert of Chartres and Hilduin of Saint Denis might help to demonstrate how influential Gregory's *Histories* still were many centuries after his death. In addition to illustrating the great care with which the *Histories* were read and interpreted, they also demonstrate the prestige and prominence of the text and its author in the time of Hilduin and Fulbert. The bishop of Tours clearly did not succeed in keeping his work "intact and unchanged" just as he had left it.[21] But he did succeed in his efforts to link the providential message of his *Histories* to his spiritual authority, an act that earned his historical vision a firm place in debates and reflections about the history and future perspectives of Christianity and the Christian church in the medieval Frankish kingdoms.

The actual transmission of Gregory's *Histories* in the early Middle Ages seems to speak against such a view. For a long time, modern scholars have viewed the decision of early medieval compilers and editors of the *Histories* to disregard Gregory's last will as demonstrative of the his failure to firmly establish his own Christian vision of community. According to such an interpretation, the 'failure' of Gregory of Tours is already evident in the Merovingian six-book version, which was probably compiled within a generation of Gregory's death.[22]

As briefly mentioned above, the compilers did not only omit the last four books, ending their narrative with the death of Chilperic I in 584; they also reorganized Gregory's narrative by leaving out a large number of chapters from the first six books. At first glance the compilers seem to have mainly omitted stories concerning bishops, clerics and churches. Consequently the genesis of

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19   See, *Epistolae Variorum* 20, (ed.) Dümmler, M G H Epist. 5 (Hanover, 1899), 333: "Fortunatus…
      ymnum rithmice compositionis pulcherimmum de isto gloriosissime martyre composu-
      erit, in quo commemorat eum a beato Clemente huc destinatum, sicut in Latinorum pagi-
      nis didicit, de natione autem eius et ordinatione episcopatus mentionem non facit, quia
      lingua Graeca penitus expers fuit."

20   See *Epistolae Variorum* 20, 333: "vir prudens et scolastissimus Fortunatus qui plura et fre-
      quenter ad eundem scripserat." On Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory of Tours, see George,
      Venantius Fortunatus, 124–131; and above, Roberts, ch. 2.

21   Cf. above, at n. 1.

22   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 197–198, 201.

the six-book version and its subsequent success has often been explained in terms of a conscious effort to erase or reduce the clerical or ecclesiastical content of the work, in order to rewrite it for an audience who wanted to read a history of the Franks and their kings. Since Thierry Ruinart's edition of 1699 the six-book version has been understood as attesting to a process by which Gregory's text was eventually reworked and reinterpreted as a 'Frankish history'.[23] Although a 'History of the Franks' had not been Gregory's goal, that was what later readers wanted, and what the redactors of the abridged version supplied. They provided a brisker narrative "so designed as to be, in effect, the first 'History of the Franks.'"[24]

However, a comparison of the Merovingian six-book version with Gregory's text shows that at no point in the manuscripts of the six-book-recension are the Franks or their kings given a firmer place in the *regnum* and their history than Gregory had originally allowed them. As research in the last decades has shown, this was not a very firm place.[25] In his *Histories* Gregory portrayed the Franks as highly differentiated and rather incoherent groupings in order to prevent a strong notion of Frankish identity from unfolding as a common focus for political and social integration.

This becomes most obvious when Gregory discusses the origins and early history of the Franks in *Hist.* 2.9. The Franks appear as historically significant players only after Gregory has already laid out the foundation of his spiritual topography of Christian Gaul in the first book.[26] At the same time he carefully avoids giving the Franks a common history grounded in an ancient and

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23   Thierry Ruinart, "In novam editionem sancti Gregorii episcopi Turonensis," PL 71 (Paris, 1879), 9–114; Goffart, *Narrators*, 122–124. The edition by Ruinart was published in 1699; his opinion was already taken into account in the conclusion of the 1735 *Histoire litteraire de la France*; see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 198.

24   Walter Goffart, "From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum* and Back Again: Aspects of the Textual History of Gregory of Tours," in *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of Richard Sullivan*, (eds.) Thomas F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni (Kalamazoo, 1987), 55–76, here 65; idem *Narrators*, 123; Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 198–201; idem, "Die Franken und die fränkische Geschichte in der Perspektive der Historiographie Gregors von Tours," in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, (eds.) Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 32 (Vienna and Munich, 1994), 326–344, here 327–330; idem, "Grégoire de Tours: 'Père de l'histoire de France'?" in *Histoire de France, historiens de France*, (eds.) Yves Marie Bercé and Philippe Contamine (Paris, 1994), 19–45.

25   Heinzelmann, "Die Franken"; Goffart, *Narrators*, 119–127; Helmut Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Rise of Western Ethnicity* (Cambridge, 2015), 51–73.

26   On which, see: Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 127–132.

mythical past. During a lengthy discussion on the impossibility of finding reliable sources for the history of the first Frankish kings, Gregory shows that only after their arrival in Gaul did the Franks first have kings; only then can they be located in time and space as a socially and politically coherent group.[27]

The compilers of the six-book version did nothing to supplement Gregory's narrative with a prestigious past or origin story of the Franks. And there is no other instance in the entire six-book version where the compilers enhanced the role of the Franks or their kings or tried to present the Frankish past as a shared history for the inhabitants of the Merovingian *regnum*.[28]

Thus, the six-book version is very different from the rewriting of Gregory's *Histories* in the two other extant Merovingian histories. In both – the *Chronicle* of Fredegar, the oldest extant redaction of which was compiled around 660, and the *Liber historiae Francorum*, written in 726/27 – the six-book version was used to recount Frankish history up until the death of Chilperic I in 584. And in both the authors chose to rework Gregory's narrative into a Frankish history (or into two Frankish histories, since their authors had very different ideas about the conception and meaning of Frankish history and identity).[29] In order to do so, however, they had to grapple with several challenges. They were forced to fundamentally rewrite and revise the text of the six-book version, again omitting parts of the narrative, inserting subtle changes, and constructing entirely original passages. As I have argued elsewhere at greater length, their *réécriture* was in fact part of an ongoing conversation with and argument against Gregory and his views regarding the early history of the Franks and their kings.[30]

As different as the rewritings of the Merovingian six-book version in the *Chronicle* of Fredegar and the *Liber historiae Francorum* were from their *Vorlage*, they nevertheless led historians to understand the six-book version as part of a process in which Gregory's narrative was slowly but surely reframed and reinterpreted as a Frankish history. This is certainly true for the use of Gregory's *Histories* in the two later historical works. But, given the absence of

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27   Cf. Helmut Reimitz, "Cultural brokers of a common past. History, identity and ethnicity in the Merovingian kingdoms" in *Strategies of Identification – Early Medieval Perspectives*, (eds.) Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout, 2013), 257–302, here 273–278.

28   See Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 136–9.

29   For a comprehensive discussion of the reworkings of Gregory's Histories see my forthcoming *History, Frankish Identity*, 140–65. See also Magali Coumert, *Origines des peuples: Les récits d'origine des peuples dans le Haut Moyen Âge occidental (550–850)*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Moyen Âge et Temps Modernes 42 (Paris, 2007), 316–324; and Goffart, "From *Historiae*."

30   Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 283–91.

any hint of such a tendency in the Merovingian six-book recension, we should probably draw a firmer distinction between the use of Gregory's narrative and authority by the Merovingian compilers of the six book-version and its appropriation by the authors of the Fredegar's *Chronicle* and the *Liber historiae Francorum*. By exploring the work of the Merovingian compilers on their own terms, we will see that their aim was not to supply a brisker narrative 'so designed as to be, in effect, the first "History of the Franks."'[31] Rather, they attempted to reconfigure Gregory's stories regarding the formation of Christianity, the church, and pastoral power in Gaul in order to adapt them to the changed socio–political settings of the 7th century.

This is true for the Carolingian compilations of Gregory's *Histories* as well. As we will see, Carolingian compilers built upon and continued the work of their Merovingian predecessors, supplementing their selection with sections from an exemplar with all ten books in order to adapt the *Histories* to their respective visions of a Carolingian Christendom. Though far from how Gregory wanted his *Histories* to be transmitted, Merovingian and Carolingian compilers nevertheless continued his historiographical project within the outline he himself had defined.

In disregarding Gregory's last will, the Merovingian and Carolingian compilers constantly adopted and adapted his vision to new circumstances, produced new versions and thereby continuously enhanced the prominence of the narrative and its author. This unceasing work on his *Histories* played a crucial role in establishing Gregory as one of the most eminent historical authorities of Christian Gaul throughout the Middle Ages. In this article we will explore this process until the end of the early Middle Ages, since it is particularly the period from the 7th to the 10th centuries in which we observe the creation of different and varying versions of Gregory's work.

15.2 Gregory's Histories in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries: The Merovingian Six-Book Version

If Hilduin had wanted to use the various versions of the *Histories* to undermine the authority of the narrative it would not have helped him much with regard to Saint Denis. The arrival of Saint Denis in Gaul under the emperor Decius can be found in all the versions of the *Histories*. This is even true for the manuscripts of the Merovingian six-book recension, whose compilers skipped more chapters in the first six books than any other reworking of the *Histories* that

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31   Above at n. 24.

has come down to us.[32] Thus, the compilers preserved one of the crucial moments in the history of Christian Gaul recounted in Gregory's narrative. Saint Denis was one of the *septem viri,* who were sent to Gaul to preach, and thus stands at the origins of Christian Gaul.

These *septem viri* began to spread Christianity "in Gallis per omnibus." They went to cities where only a "few believed"; they ordained priests and taught them how to chant psalms and to preach. They gave instructions for building churches, and how one ought to worship the Almighty God (*Hist.* 1.30–31). Building on the foundations of these bishops, martyrs and saints, Gregory proceeded to compose a spiritual genealogy of Christian Gaul, its cults and its bishoprics. In mapping out this spiritual topography he provided a new structure to be utilized for the integration and identification of all social groups in Gaul, among whom the Franks were just one of many other groups in the Merovingian kingdom. While Gregory develops the origins of Christian Gaul and the foundations of his spiritual topography in his first book, which ends with the arrival of Saint Martin of Tours, he recounts the establishment of the political framework of his time, the *regnum*, in his second book. As Gregory presents it, the establishment of Merovingian rule over all of Gaul – "per totas Gallias" – was linked to royal support for Gallic Christendom as Gregory understood it; the history of this Merovingian phase of Gallic Christianity began with the conversion and baptism of the first Christian Frankish king, Clovis (*Hist.* 2.31).

But in Gregory's vision the future did not automatically proceed from the past. For Gregory, Clovis' baptism did not initiate the fulfilment of Gregory's *Histories* in Clovis' *regnum*. It was the beginning of the "struggle which according to the apostle was being waged deep inside the man."[33] A common future was not inherently grounded in a common past. It was built through continual decisions in favor of the Christian morality that Gregory outlines in his narratives. No one was free of flaws, not even King Guntram (a. 561–592), whom Gregory compared to a *sacerdos domini*. No one was altogether lost, not even King Chilperic (a. 561–584), the Herod and Nero of Gregory's time. Everyone made mistakes, including Gregory himself.[34] The decisive criterion

32   For an overview of the selection of chapters, see Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 145–54; and the discussion in Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 199–201, and idem, "Die Franken."

33   *Hist.* 5, prol.; Brown, "Gregory of Tours," 14, with reference to Gregory's general preface to his *Histories*; on the prologue to Book 5: Guy Halsall, "The Preface to Book v of Gregory of Tours' *Histories*: Its Form, Context and Significance," *English Historical Review* 122 (2007), 297–317.

34   On the ambiguities in Gregory's portrayal of different rulers, see Ian Wood, *Gregory of Tours* (Bangor, 1994), 47; cf. Alexander Callander Murray, "Chronology and Composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," 157–174.

for Gregory's Christian vision of community was not a one-off decision. It was a continual striving toward the morals and values of his understanding of Christianity. In his manifold and highly varied case histories, Gregory explored the perspectives and opportunities available to Merovingian society, should its members seriously direct themselves towards the Christian vision of community the holy bishops and men of Gaul represented.

To be sure, many of Gregory's case histories, which concerned clerics, saints and martyrs, were stricken from the six-book recension. But this should not mislead us to interpret these omissions as creating a more secular narrative, which Merovingian compilers and editors might have found more difficult than modern historians. In fact the dividing lines between the ecclesiastical and political, the social and religious spheres were extremely faint in the Merovingian period. I would therefore suggest a different interpretation of the six-book recension. The Merovingian compilers did not work against Gregory's vision of community. They actually tried to build on it and to adapt it to the changed circumstances of the 7th century. It was precisely because the compilers wanted to build on his vision that they needed to reconfigure his *Histories* to meet the changed socio-political setting of the 7th century.

The removal of the last four books seems to support such an interpretation. In them, Gregory defined the political framework of his vision through the Austrasian-Burgundian alliance under Guntram and his designated successor, Childebert II. Gregory seems to have found the idea of a union of the Burgundian-Austrasian kingdom under Childebert's rule attractive for several reasons.[35] However when the six-book version of his *Histories* was produced about a generation after Gregory's death in 594,[36] the political situation in Gaul had changed fundamentally. In 613 after the death of Childebert's sons, Chlothar II, the son of Chilperic I, had ended the hegemony of the Austrasian-Burgundian kings and established himself successfully as the sole ruler of the Merovingian kingdoms with the region around Paris as its new center.[37] Soon after Chlothar's deposition of the powerful Queen-(grand)mother Brunhild,

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35   Cf. the contribution of Stefan Esders, above, Ch. 12.

36   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 201.

37   Régine Le Jan, "Timor, amicitia, odium. Les liens politiques à l'epoque Merovingienne", in *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europäische Perspektiven*, (eds.) Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 16 (Vienna, 2009), 217–226; Stefan Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition und merowingisches Königtum. Zum Rechtscharakter politischer Herrschaft in Burgund im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 134 (Göttingen, 1997), 340–357; Wood, Ian, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (London, 1994)*, 140–149.

members of the Merovingian elites must have regarded the perspective of an Austrasian-Burgundian kingdom as hopelessly outdated.

Nonetheless, it seems that members of the Merovingian elites were still interested in Gregory's vision for a Merovingian Christian community, which emphasized the important role of the bishop as a kind of watchman of the kingdom.[38] How to adapt and adopt Gregory's accounts of the 7th century might have been a particularly important question for episcopal and pastoral figures in light of the process that has recently been explored as the "end of Ancient Christianity" in Gaul.[39] One important factor in this process was certainly the experimentation with new forms of monastic life and the increasing importance of new 'powerhouses of prayers' in the first half of the 7th century.[40] With their great success these powerhouses provided increasingly new foci for the 'redistribution of resources' – the circulation of spiritual, economic and political capital among bishops, kings, and secular and ecclesiastical elites in the Merovingian kingdoms.[41]

While Gregory's views on the responsibility of the episcopal office must have been of great interest to this process, 7th-century pastors were clearly less interested in the personal resources that accompanied Gregory's own legitimation. To legitimate his role as historical author, episcopal actor and spiritual authority, Gregory had carefully woven his familial history into the spiritual genealogy of Gaul. Two of the *septem viri*, Gatianus and Stremonius, for instance, stand at the beginning of two continual succession-lines of bishops, lines that go on to include many of Gregory's spiritual and actual *familia*.[42]

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38   Jamie Kreiner, "About the Bishops: The Episcopal Entourage and the Economy of Government in Post-Roman Gaul', *Speculum*, 86/2 (2011), 321–360.

39   Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, 2012); see also idem, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, 200–1000*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2013), Ch. 9, in part. 219–221 and 253–266.

40   Albrecht Diem, *Das monastische Experiment: Die Rolle der Keuschheit bei der Entstehung des westlichen Klosterwesens* (Münster, 2005); Yaniv Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul. Columbanian Monasticism and the Frankish Elites* (Cambridge, 2014).

41   Janet Nelson, "Queens as Jezebels: The Career of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History," *Studies in Church History*, Subsidia 1 (1978), 31–77, here 39; Régine Le Jan, "Convents, Violence and Competition for Power in Francia," in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, (eds.) Mayke de Jong, Frans Theuws, and Carine van Rijn, (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 2001), 243–270; see now Brown, "*Amator patriae*"; idem *Eye of the Needle*, 479–526.

42   See Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 23–29; and Helmut Reimitz, "Social Networks and Identities in Frankish Historiography: New Aspects of the Textual History of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae*," in *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages – Texts, Resources*

Stremonius was the first bishop of Clermont, the city in which Gregory grew up and where he might have hoped to become the saints' successor himself.[43] With Gatianus begins the church history of Tours, the church whose bishop Gregory eventually became (*Hist.* 1.30). This information was clearly superfluous to the compilers of the six-book version. By omitting the chapters on bishops, martyrs and saints, the Merovingian compilers of the *Histories* tore apart the carefully woven fabric of the spiritual and familial genealogy that Gregory had used to legitimize his position as the bishop of Tours, as the author of his *Histories*, and as the visionary prophet he plays in his own story.

We find that even in the first two books of the six-book version many stories regarding bishops or saints of Tours and Clermont were cut. Most telling is the omission of Chapters 28, 29 and 31 in the first book – chapters that frame Gregory's story of the mission of the *septem viri* and origins of Christian Gaul (*Hist.* 1.30, see Table 15.1). Gregory's two chapters preceding the mission of the *septem viri* deal with the famous story of the martyrs of Lyons, a story that was widely known not least through the history of the first Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea.[44] The compilers probably excluded the chapters because Gregory also mentions a certain Vettius Epagathus as the second who fell victim to the persecution once Irenaeus the bishop of Lyons had been killed (*Hist.* 1.29). But as we hear from Gregory in Chapter 31, which was likewise omitted by the six-book compilers, Vettius Epagathus was not only the second martyr of Lyons but also the ancestor of Leocadius – and Leocadius was Gregory's great grandfather.[45]

This is the first of many instances where the compilers of the six-book version severed the familial and spiritual network that Gregory had so carefully woven into his text. After Book 3, which remained complete and unabridged, this trend was continued in Book 4 where the most prominent members of Gregory's family fell victim to the omissions of the compilers (see Table 15.2). In Chapter 5 the compilers amputated the section on Gregory's uncle Gallus who initiated and institutionalized the yearly processions from Clermont to Julian of Brioude (*Hist.* 4.5). Gregory's uncle was joined in his fate by Cato and Cautinus whose struggle to succeed Gallus in Clermont is described in the following chapters (*Hist.* 4.6–7). Likewise, by skipping Chapters 5 and 36, the editors left

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and Artifacts, (eds.) Richard Corradini, Maximilian Diesenberger, and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden, 2002), 229–268, here 247–248.

43   *Hist.* 1.30; Wood, *Gregory*, 8.

44   See James Corke-Webster, "A Literary Historian: Eusebius of Caesarea and the Martyrs of Lyons and Palestine," *Studia Patristica* 66 (2013), 91–201, with further literature.

45   *Hist.* 1.31; for Gregory's family see Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 11–28.

TABLE 15.1   *Chapters of Book I. Comparison with six-book version, Ms Cambrai, BM 684 (B1 of Krusch)*

Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, ed. Krusch, pp. 1–3	Cambrai, BM 684
General preface	General preface
Table of contents	Table of contents
Preface to Book I	Preface to Book I
1. De Adam et Ewa.	<I.> De Adam et Euua.
2. De Cain et Abel.	<II.> De Cain et Abel.
3. De Enoch iusto.	<III.> De Enoch iusto.
4. De diluvio.	<IIII.> De diluvio.
5. De Chus adinventorem staticuli.	<V.> De Chus adinventorem staticuli.
6. De Babillonia.	<VI.> De Babollonia.
7. De Abraham et Nino.	<VII.> De Abraham et Nino.
8. De Isaac, Isau et Iob et Iacob.	<VIII.> De Isaac, Isau et Iob et Iacob.
9. De Ioseph in Aegipto.	<VIIII.> De Iuseph in Aegipto.
10. De transitu rubri maris.	<X.> De transitu rubri maris.
11. De populo in deserto et Iosue.	<XI.> De populo in deserto et Iosue.
12. De captivitate populi Israhelitici et generationebus usque David.	<XII.> De captivitate populi Israelithici et generationebus usque David.
13. De Salamone et aedificatione templi.	XIII. De Salamone et aedificatione templi.
14. De divisione regni Israhelitic.	XIIII. De divisione regni Israelithici.
15. De captivitate in Babillonia.	XV. De captivitate in Babillonia.
16. De nativitate Christi.	<XV>I. De nativitate Christi.
17. De diversis gentium regnis.	XVII. De diversis gentium regni.
18. Quo tempore Lugdunos sit condita.	XVIII. Quo tempore Lugduno sit condita.
19. De muneribus magorum et necem infantum.	X<VIIII.> De muneribus magorum et necem infantum.
20. De mirabilibus et passione Christi.	<XX.> De <m>irabilibus et passion Christi.
21. De Ioseph, qui eum sepelivit.	<XXI.> De Ioseph, qui eum sepelivit.
22. De Iacobo apostulo.	<XXII.> De Iacobo apostolo.
23. De die resurrectiones dominicae.	<XXIII.> De die resurrectiones dominicae.
24. De ascensione Domini et de interitu Pilati atque Herodis.	<XXIIII.> De ascensione Domini et de interitu Pilati atque Herodis.
25. De passione apostolorum atque Nerone.	<XXV.> De passione apostilorum atque Nerone.

Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, ed. Krusch, pp. 1–3	Cambrai, BM 684
26. De Iacobo, Marco et Iohanne euangelista.	XXV<I>. De Iacobo, Marco et Iohanne euangelista.
27. De persecutione sub Traiano.	XXVII. De persecutione sub Traiano.
28. De Adriano et adinventionibus hereticorum et passione sancti Policarpi atque Iustini.	
29. De sancto Photino, Hirineo vel reliquis martyribus Lugdunensibus.	
30. De septem viris in Galleis ad praedicandum missis.	XXVIII. De septem viris in Galleis ad praedicandum missis.
31. De aecclesia Biturgia.	
32. De Chroco et de delubro Arverno.	XXVIII<I>. De Chroco et de delubro Aruerno.
33. De martiribus qui circa Arvernum passi sunt.	
34. De sancto Privato martyre .	
35. De Quirino episcopo et martyre.	
36. De nativitate sancti Martini et crucis inventione.	
37. De Iacobo Nisebeno episcopo.	
38. De transitu Antonii monachi.	
39. De adventum sancti Martini.	XXX. De adventu sancti Martini.
40. De Melanea matron.	XXXI. De Melanea matrona.
41. De interitu Valentis imperatoris.	<XXXII.> De interitu Ualentis imperatoris.[1]
42. De imperio Theudosi.	XXXIII. De imperio Theudosi.[2]
43. De interitum Maximi tirrani.	XXXIIII. De interitum Maximi tiranni.
44. De Orbico Arvernorum episcopo.	
45. De sancto Hillidio episcopo.	
46. De Nepotiano atque Arthemio episcopis.	
47. De castitate amantium.	
48. De transitu sancti Martini.	XXXV. De transitu sancti Martini.

TABLE 15.2   *Chapters of Book 4. Comparison with six-book version, Ms Cambrai, BM 684 (B1 of Krusch)*

Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, ed. Krusch, pp. 133–135	Cambrai, BM 684
Table of contents	Table of contents
Praeface to Book IV	Preface to book IV
1. De obito Chrodigildis regina.	I. De obito Chrodigildis regina.
2. Quod Chlothacharius rex tertiam partem fructuum eclesiis auferre voluit.	II. Quod Chlotharius rex tertiam partem fructum eclesiis auferre voluit
3. De uxoribus ac filiis eius.	III. De uxoribus ac filiis eius.
4. De Brinctanorum comitibus.	IIII. De Brinctanorum comitibus.
5. De sancto Gallo episcopo.	
6. De Catone presbytero.	
7. De episcopatu Cautini.	
8. De Hispanorum regibus.	V. De Hispanorum regibus.
9. De obitu Theudovaldo.	VI. De obitu Theudoualdo.
10. De rebellione Saxenum.	VII. De rebellione Saxenum.
11. Quod Catonem ex iussu regis ad episcopatum Turonici petierunt.	
12. De Anastasio presbytero.	
13. De levitate ac malitia Chramni, et de Cautino ac Firmino.	VIII. De levitate ac malitia Chramni, et de Cautino ac Firmino.
14. Quod Chlothacharius contra Saxones abiit iterata vice.	<V>IIII. Quod Chlotharius contra Saxones abiit iterata vice.
15. De episcopatu sancti Eufroni.	
16. De Chramno et satellitibus eius et malis quae gessit, vel qualiter Divione advenit.	X. De Chramno et satellitibus eius et malis quae gessit, vel qualiter Diuione advenit.
17. Quod Chramnus ad Childeberthum transiit.	<X>I. Quod Chramnus ad Childebertum transiit.
18. De Austrapio duce.	<XII.> De Austrapio duce.
19. De obitu sancti Medardi episcopi.	
20. De obitu Childeberthi et interitu Chramni.	<XI>II. De obitu Childeberti et interitu Chramni.
21. De obitu Chlothachari regis.	<XI>III. De obitu Chlothari regis.
22. Divisio regni inter filios eius.	<XV.> Divisio regni inter filios eius.
23. Quod Sigiberthus contra Chunus abiit, et Chilpericus civitates eius pervasit.	<XV>I. Quod Sigibertus contra Hunus abiit, et *(fol. 56rb) Chilpericus civitates eius pervasit.
24. De patriciato Celsi.	X<VII.> De patriciato Celsi.

Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, ed. Krusch, pp. 133–135	Cambrai, BM 684
25. De uxoribus Gunthchramni.	\<XVIII.\> De uxoribus Gunthramni.
26. De uxoribus Chariberthi.	\<XVIIII.\> De uxoribus Chariberti.
27. Quod Sigiberthus Brunichildem accepit.	\<XX.\> Quod Sigibertus Brunichildem accepit.
28. De uxoribus Chilperici.	XXI. De uxoribus Chilperici.
29. De secundo Sigiberthi contra Chunus bellum.	\<XXII.\> De secundo Sigibertho contra Chunus bellum.
30. Quod Arverni ad capiendam Arilatensim urbem ex iussu Sigiberthi regis abierunt.	\<XXIII.\> Quod Aruerni ad capiendam Arilatensim urbem ex iussu Sigiberti regis abierunt.
31. De Tauredune castro et aliis signis.	\<XXIIII.\> De Tauredune castro et aliis signis.
32. De Iuliano monacho.	
33. De Sunniulfo abbate.	
34. De Burdigalense monacho.	
35. De episcopatu Abiti Arverni.	
36. De sancto Nicetio Lugdunense.	
37. De sancto Friardo recluso.	
38. De regibus Hispanorum.	\<XXV.\> De regibus Hispanorum.
39. De interitu Palladi Arverni.	\<XXVI.\> De interitu Palladi Aruenni.
40. De imperio Iustini.	\<XXVII.\> De imperio Iustini.
41. Quod Alboenus cum Langobardis Italiam occupavit.	\<XXVIII.\> Quod Alboenus cum Langobardis Italiam occupavit.
42. De bellis Mummoli cum eisdem.	\<XXVIIII.\> De bellis Mummoli cum eisdem.
43. De archidiacono Massiliense.	
44. De Langobardis et Mummolo.	XXX. De Langobardis et Mummulo.
45. Quod Mummolus Turonus venit.	XXXI. Quod Mummolus Turonus venit.
46. De interitu Andarci.	XXXII. De interitu Andarci.
47. Quod Theudoberthus civitatis pervasit.	XXXIII. Quod Theodoberthus *(fol. 56va) civitatis pervasit
48. De Latta monasterio.	
49. Quod Sigiberthus Parisius venit.	\<XXXIIII.\> Quod Sigibertus Parisius venit.
50. Quod Chilpericus cum Guntchramno foedus iniit, et de obitu Theudoberthi, fili eius	\<XXXV.\> Quod Chilpericus cum Gunthramno foedus iniit, et de obitu Theodoberti, fili eius.
51. De obitu Sigiberthi regis.	\<XXXVI.\> De obitu Sigiberthi reges.

out an account about another of Gregory's uncles, Nicetius of Lyons, who is portrayed not only as an episcopal workaholic but also as a saint who was vigorously defending the preservation of his achievement and his memory. The compilers even omitted the chapter on Gregory's immediate predecessor and uncle Eufronius. This last omission not only cut another thread in Gregory's familial network, but also deleted a statement about Gregory's family that Gregory had put in the mouth of king Chlothar I. The king is said to have justified his appointment of Gregory's uncle on the grounds that he came from one of the first and most noble families of the kingdom (*Hist.* 4.15).

Gregory's episcopal relatives were not the only people whom the Merovingian compilers removed from the *Histories*. Take the example of *dux Gundulfus*, who was sent by Childebert II to Avignon to defend the king's control of the territory, an incident mentioned in both the original and the six-book version (*Hist.* 6.26). Gregory had also spoken of Gundulf a few chapters earlier, when Childebert sent the *dux* to Marseilles. Gundulf had wanted to avoid crossing into Burgundian territory, so he took a detour through Tours, where he met Gregory. Gregory took this occasion to explain that Gundulf was a member of the senatorial class ("de genere senatorio") as well as his mother's uncle (*Hist.* 6.11). Although the compilers preserved the other chapter that discussed Gundulf, they omitted this chapter with the information about Gundulf's familial ties to Gregory.

Furthermore, the Merovingian compilers did not solely omit individual stories about Gregory's familial, saintly and episcopal connections. With the fifth chapter of the fifth book – a chapter on Gregory's deceased brother Sylvester – they also cut out the chapter which Ian Wood aptly called the cornerstone for reconstructing the genealogy of Gregory.[46] To be sure, historians need many tools of modern historical research for that kind of reconstruction.[47] But the compilers of the six-book version were much closer to the world in which Gregory developed his literary strategies to position himself as *actor*, *auctor* and *auctoritas*. They, too, could identify the personal dimensions of his work, if only to excise them. Their goal was to latch onto Gregory's genealogy of pastoral power in Gaul, and to do this, it was necessary above all to reconfigure the spiritual topography he so neatly constructed, so as to make it applicable in the changed religious and political landscape of the 7th century. Their strategy was not primarily aimed at the successors of Gregory's familial network. Rather, it

46   Ian Wood, "The Individuality of Gregory of Tours," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (eds.) Mitchell/Wood, 29–46, here 40.

47   Wood, "Individuality," 40, Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 11–22; Goffart, *Narrators*, 192–193.

released the text from what it represented: an outdated spiritual topography that defined Merovingian Christendom mainly through the cults and saints of Southern Gaul and the obsolete political constellation to which this topography was connected. In doing so the compilers developed new rooms for manoeuvre – new *Spielräume* – to bring Gregory's Christian vision of community up to date and to situate it within new spiritual topographies.

One example of how later authors reconfigured the spiritual topography of Gaul in the 7th century can be found in the rearrangement of hagiographical texts about Germanus of Auxerre in the *Vita Germani interpolata* a reworking of Constantius' *vita Germani* that Wolfert van Egmond has convincingly dated to the 7th century.[48] Collecting all possible information in order to enhance the prestige of the saint, the compiler included passages of Gregory of Tours' *Liber de virtutibus S. Iuliani*. In doing so he changed the excerpted text substantially, in order to underline the superiority of Germanus over the saint that Gregory and his family so venerated; he also stressed the devotional inadequacy of Brioude more generally in competition with Auxerre. In his *Liber de virtutibus* Gregory mentions that it was his own uncle Gallus who instituted the yearly processions to the sanctuary of Julian in Brioude. The compiler of the *Vita interpolata* uses this passage from Gregory but substantially modifies it. Both versions say that the residents of Brioude did not know when Julian's feast day was, and that when Germanus visited the village and learned about this problem, he suggested that everyone pray, in the hope that God would reveal the correct day. In Gregory's version everyone prayed, and the next day Germanus summoned the town leaders together and told them what the date was. But the *Vita interpolata* says that after Germanus made his suggestion, everyone went home, and Germanus kept vigil all night. The next day when he summoned the leaders, he made a point of asking them if anyone had received a sign from God. They stated that they had not. Only then does Germanus reveal the date to them.[49] It seems that the *Vita interpolata* undermines and almost shames the role of Brioude in celebrating its own saint on the right day in order to elevate Germanus' role as a saint.

We also find Germanus in competition with Gregory's most important saint, Martin, in the six-book version of his *Histories*. In his sermon at the beginning

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48   Wolfert van Egmond, *Conversing with the Saints: Communication in Pre-Carolingian Hagiography from Auxerre* (Turnhout, 2006), 107–127.

49   Cf. *Vita Germani interpolata* 58, AASS Julii 7 (1731), 200–220, with *VJ* 29. I should like to thank Jamie Kreiner to whom I owe this reference to the *Vita interpolata*; for hagiographical writings in the 7th-century Merovingian kingdoms, see now Jaime Kreiner, *The Social Life of Hagiography in the Merovingian Kingdom* (Cambridge, 2014).

of the trial against Praetextatus, Gregory had already attempted to make his colleagues aware of their pastoral responsibility by citing historical examples, which included, among others, the example of Saint Martin and his clash with the Emperor Maximus.[50] In their version of Gregory's speech, however, the six-book redactors switched the name of Martin with the name of his contemporary Germanus.[51] This 'mistake' fits well with the observed tendencies of the 7th-century interpolator of the *Vita Germani*. He also took up Gregory's strategies and adapted them, in order to give Auxerre a higher profile in the spiritual topography of Gaul.

Similar motives seem to lie behind the composition of the Rictiovarus cycle, a collection of martyr stories that was compiled around the middle of the 7th century. Not only do the subjects share a persecutor in common, (the Roman prefect Rictiovarus), but they also all suffered their martyrdoms in northern Gaul. Already in the Merovingian period their veneration is attested in a number of places, in the area of Chlothar's new regnal centre and in Neustria. Their histories clearly recall some of Gregory's themes, even while competing with his spiritual topography. Like Gregory's *septem viri*, so does the future martyr Quintinianus come to Gaul (in this case, northern Gaul) to preach with eleven other missionaries. In describing how the preacher suffered his martyrdom in various places, and how he was venerated here and there, the text – like Gregory's *Histories* – mapped out its own spiritual topography, although in contrast to Gregory, it did so for northern Gaul and the area around the centre of Chlothar's kingdom: Soissons, Seins-en-Amienois, Corbie and Beauvais.[52] The name of Saint-Quentin, a city about 100 miles north of Paris, still recalls the martyr who is said to have been killed there. But this was not always the case. His remains were found only half a century after his death, but the place where they were venerated was subsequently forgotten. It was no less noble a

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50   *Hist.* 5.18 and 1.43, for the passages see Reimitz, "Contradictory Stereotypes," with further literature.

51   *Hist*. 5.18 (p. 218, with note c).

52   Charles Meriaux and Brigitte Meijns, "Le cycle de Rictiovar et la topographie chrétienne des campagnes septentrionales à l'époque mérovingienne," in *Les premiers temps chrétiens dans le territoire de la France actuelle: Hagiographie, épigraphie et archéologie. Nouvelles approches et perspectives de recherche*, (eds.) Dominique Paris-Poulain, Sara Nardi Combescure, and Daniel Istria (Rennes, 2009), 19–33; Michelle Gaillard, "Remarques sur les plus anciennes versions de la *Passio* et de l'*Inventio* des saints Fuscien, Victoric et Gentien," in *Parva pro magnis munera. Études de literature tardo-antique et médiévale offertes à François Dolbeau par ses élèves*, (ed.) Monique Goullet (Turnhout, 2009), 397–409.

person than Eligius, treasurer at the Merovingian court and later bishop of Noyon, who rediscovered the body.[53]

However, the new *Spielräume* for the reconfiguration of the spiritual topography of Gaul were never used for substantial revisions of and interpolations to the text of the six-book recension of Gregory's *Histories* itself.[54] Although the extant manuscripts of the Merovingian edition were all copied about two generations after the original compilation of the text,[55] the different manuscripts from the Merovingian period transmit a relatively coherent text. The main building blocks of the rearrangement are Gregory's chapters. Apart from subtle and inconspicuous alterations of the text, such as the already mentioned replacement of Martin with Germanus, the Merovingian compilers clearly tried to present the text they selected from Gregory as unchanged and intact. But the authority that this version acquired cannot easily be explained by a process in which the new six-book version replaced the older one and became the original version for Merovingian compilers and copyists. There is evidence that a complete ten-book version circulated as well. This is demonstrated by 7th-century fragments of the text that transmit a few chapters of the intact ten-book version.[56] One of the manuscripts of the Merovingian six-book recension copied soon after 700, a manuscript which is today kept in Cambrai, was complemented with what once must have been a complete version of Books 7–10 before the middle of the 8th century.[57] While the paleography and codicology of this manuscripts shows that Books 7–10 were an addition of later copyists, another later Carolingian manuscript from around 800 represents a copy of another exemplar of the 'extended' Merovingian version.[58]

The constant work on Gregory's historiographical legacy helped to create not only new *Spielräume* for the reconfiguration of the spiritual topography of Gaul but also ever wider room for maneuver to use Gregory's text itself for new visions of a Christian community. Although the reworking of the *Histories* disregarded Gregory's last wish, its success nevertheless helped to establish Gregory's prestige

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53   *Vita Eligii* II 6, 697–699.

54   Jamie Kreiner and I are planning to work a more comprehensive study on the Merovingian six-book version and its hagiographical contexts.

55   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 197–201.

56   Cf. above, at n. 6.

57   Cambrai, BM 624 (684); Heinzelmann and Bourgain, "L'œuvre," 273–317.

58   Brussels, Bibliothéque Royale 9403 which is not a copy from the Cambrai manuscript but from a different exemplar, cf. Krusch in *Hist.* xxv–xxvi; cf. also the revised stemma in Kai Peter Hilchenbach, *Das vierte Buch der Historien von Gregor von Tours: Edition mit sprachwissenschaftlich-textkritischem und historischem Kommentar*, 2 vols (Frankfurt, 2009), 1:79 with 42–44.

as the most important authority on the history of the Christian origins of Gaul and the Frankish kingdoms. Carolingian compilers of Gregory's histories used both Gregory's authority as well as the different versions of his *Histories* to compile new versions of a Gregoryesque history in order to develop their vision for the future of Christianity and society in the Carolingian empire.

15.3   The Carolingian Editions of Gregory of Tours' Histories

Carolingian compilers in many ways followed their Merovingian predecessors in their reworking of Gregory's *Histories*. They clearly wanted to build on Gregory's authority as a historian by using his name as the author in the titles of their respective compilations. Apart from one interesting exception to which we will return later, they, too, worked exclusively with the text that Gregory had left them, using the original chapters as the main building blocks for their rearrangement of the text. Unlike their Merovingian predecessors, however, they compiled different selections of chapters using the whole ten books, rather than just the first six.

While the Carolingian versions do not transmit a coherent version in terms of the selection of chapters, their compilers followed a common framework for the creation of their new "Ten Books of *Histories*." The selection of chapters from Gregory's ten books was now reduced to nine (by combining Gregory's Book 9 and 10 into a new 9th book) and was then continued with the text of the 'Fourth Book' of the Chronicle of Fredegar and the first twenty-four chapters of its Carolingian continuation.[59]

In doing so the Carolingian compilers built not only on the model of Gregory's *Histories* but also on the models that Gregory himself had used, the *Church History* of Eusebius, and its Latin translation and continuation written by Rufinus at the beginning of the 5th century.[60] In the foreword to his translation and continuation Rufinus specified that he had shortened the last two books of the Greek text (9 and 10) and combined the remaining narrative into

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[59]   For the Carolingian version of the Fredegar-Chronicle and the *Continuationes* the compilers used, see now Roger Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, MGH Studien und Texte 44 (Hanover, 2007), 1–7, and 82–96.

[60]   On Rufinus' translation and continuation, see Mark Humphries, "Rufinus' Eusebius: Translation, Continuation, and Edition in the Latin Ecclesiastical History," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16/2 (2008), 143–164; Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004), 226–233; and for Rufinus Françoise Thélamon, *Païens et chrétiens au IVe siècle: L'apport de l'histoire ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée* (Paris, 1981).

a 9th book. To this 9th book he appended as Books 10 and 11 – like two little fish ("pisciculos duos") – his own continuation.[61] With these words Rufinus seems to have provided a general model for the writing of a church history, as well as a specific model for the compilation of Gregory's text in the Carolingian period.

15.3.1   *A New* Historia ecclesiastica *for the Carolingian Empire: The Compilation of Gregory's* Histories *at the Monastery of Lorsch*

That Rufinus was indeed one of the models for the reworking of Gregory's *Histories* is best demonstrated in the oldest extant manuscript of the Carolingian version, which was written in the monastery of Lorsch soon after the beginning of the 9th century.[62] It is a late representative of a group of manuscripts written in the 'Older Lorsch style,' which was used in the scriptorium until the first decade of the 9th century. An earlier representative of this group is a copy of Rufinus' *Church History*, and it shows many parallels to the manuscript of Gregory in terms of layout, arrangement of the text and organisation of the book. Both manuscripts, for instance, evince the efforts of the Lorsch compilers to help readers navigate through their comprehensive Church histories: in both manuscripts we find a table of contents at the beginning of every single book. On these pages the copyists or librarians inserted fixed strips of parchment to mark the pages where each book begins.[63]

It was also quite important to the Carolingian compilers that readers understood their rearrangement of Gregory's *Histories* as a Church history – an *historia ecclesiastica*.[64] The scribes had originally started the first book with the heading "Georgi Florenti sive Gregorii Toronici episcopi historiarum liber primus."[65] However, a contemporary corrector, who inspected the text by comparing what had already been copied against another exemplar or draft, changed the heading to "historiae ecclesiasticae liber primus" (see Fig. 15.1). In the same script, he also inserted the note "scedula scriptoris" on the margin of the page. Words like *schedae* and *schedulae* were often used to describe smaller booklets or unbound leaves,[66]

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61   Eusebius-Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, Prologus 11, (eds.) Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen (Berlin, 1999), 952.

62   Heidelberg, Univ. bibl. lat. 864.

63   See Helmut Reimitz, "Transformations of Late Antitquity: The Writing and Rewriting of Church History in the Monastery of Lorsch, c. 800," in *The Resources of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, (eds.) Rosamond McKitterick et al. (Cambridge, 2015), 262–82.

64   For a discussion of the title see Goffart, "From *Historiae*," and Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 104–107.

65   Heidelberg, Univ. bibl. lat. 864, fo. 2r.

66   See Clare Pilsworth, "Vile Scraps: Booklet Style Manuscript and the Transmission and Use of the Italian Martyr Narratives in Early Medieval Europe," in *Zwischen Niederschrift und*
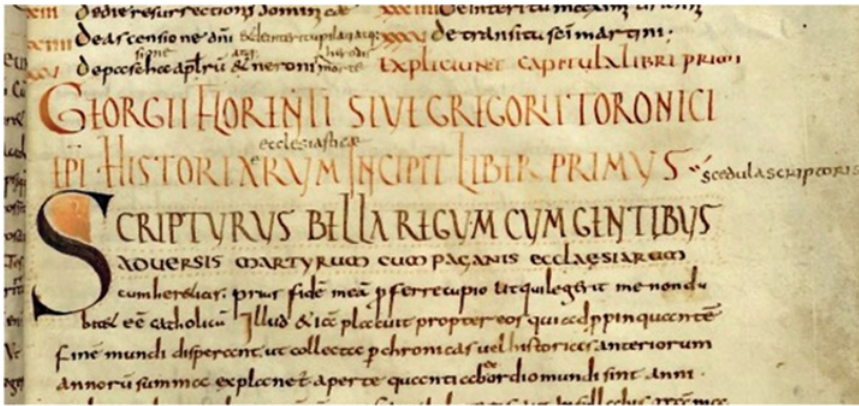
FIGURE 15.1   *Beginning of Book 1 of Gregory's* Histories *in the* Historia Ecclesiastica *of Lorsch*
               (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Pal. Lat. 864, fol. 2r)

but it is entirely possible that in this case *schedula* could also be translated as 'rough draft.'[67]

It is actually difficult to imagine the complex production of this manuscript without the existence of a prior plan or draft. This version of Gregory was neither a copy of the complete *Decem libri historiarum*, nor a copy of the Merovingian six-book recension. The codicological data show that *both* versions were used to compile this new one.[68] This is best demonstrated by a passage in the first book, where the copyists originally followed the chapter selection of the six-book recension. They continued the narrative of *Hist.* 1.27 on the persecutions of Christians under the emperor Trajan with *Hist.* 1.30 on the arrival of the *septem viri* and the origins of Christianity in Gaul. But not long after, this state of affairs was corrected. *Hist.* 1.30 on folios 7r and v was erased and Hist. 1.28–29 added

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Wiederschrift: Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik, (eds.) Richard Corradini, Maximilian Diesenberger, and Meta Niederkorn-Bruck, (Vienna, 2010), 175–196; Joseph-Claude Poulin, "Les libelli dans l'édition hagiographique avant le XIIe siècle," in *Livrets, Collections et Textes: Études sur la tradition hagiographique latine*, (ed.) Martin Heinzelmann (Ostfildern, 2006), 15–193, with further references.

67   Emin Tengström, *Die Protokollierung der Collatio Carthaginensis: Beiträge zur Kenntnis der römischen Kurzschrift nebst einem Exkurs über das Wort Scheda* (*schedula*) (Göteborg, 1962), 35–49.

68   Reimitz, "Social Networks," 262–263.

instead.[69] The initial S that began Chapter 30 in lines 30–32 of folio 7r is still visible underneath the writing.[70] Two more leafs were added to the manuscript on which the copyists added Chapters 31 and 33–38, all of which had been omitted from the six-book recension (see Table 15.3). In a similar fashion, the first chapter from Book 2, on Martin's successor Brictius, was added on folios 13 and 14. Most noticeable is the insertion that reinstated *Hist.* 2.36 on the flight of bishop Quintianus from Rodez. Quintianus had been expelled from Visigothic Spain because there were doubts about his loyalty to the Visigothic and Arian kings. He was taken up by the familial network of Gregory in Southern Gaul, where he eventually became bishop of Clermont and the predecessor of one of Gregory's uncles as bishop of Clermont.[71] In order to include this chapter, a single folio was inserted on which was written only the text of that short chapter on the verso, leaving two-thirds of it empty.[72]

Although these insertions reintroduced a number of stories about bishops and saints from Gregory's first two books, the compilers were clearly not interested in re-establishing Gregory's original text. The new version, too, lacked certain key elements of Gregory's genealogical and spiritual topography, which had played a crucial role in Gregory's mechanisms used to legitimate himself as bishop of Tours and as one of the most eminent spiritual authorities of his time. The chapter on his brother's murder, the 'cornerstone' for the reconstruction of Gregory's family, for example, is not included in the Lorsch compilation. Also absent are the chapters on Gregory's uncle Gallus (who was Quintianus' successor as bishop of Clermont), and his other uncle, Nicetius of Lyons, as well as other stories regarding Gregory the actor and his familial and spiritual network in Southern Gaul.[73] Therefore, it was not the reconstruction of Gregory's original text or his positioning in the text that were central to the Lorsch compilers' project. Rather, their particular interest in his history may be explained by the close connections that existed between Lorsch and the bishops of Metz.

Founded in the 760s by members of a noble Rhineland family, the monastery was soon placed under the jurisdiction of Chrodegang, bishop of Metz, a

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69 For the dating of the script of these passages as slightly later see Bernhard Bischoff, *Die Abtei Lorsch im Spiegel ihrer Handschriften* (Lorsch, 1989), 32. Cf. Heinzelmann and Bourgain, "L'œuvre," 287.

70 "Sub Decio vero imperatore…", *Hist.* 1.30.

71 *Hist.* 2.36 and 4.5; cf. also *VP* 4.5; Reimitz, "Social Networks," 250–251 and 255–256. See also, Wood, *Gregory*, 40–41.

72 Heidelberg, Univ.bibl., Palat. lat. 864, fol. 23a.

73 *Hist.* 4.5 (Gallus); 4.36 (Nicetius); 5.5 (corner stone); 5.48–49 (Gregory's own trial before the Synod of Berny-Rivière and his return to Tours).

TABLE 15.3   *Comparison of selected chapters of the Merovingian six book version* (*italics*) *and the edition of the* Histories *from Lorsch, Heidelberg, Univ. bibl. 864* (*the added chapters in bold*)

25. De passione apostolorum atque Nerone.	*De passione apostilorum atque Nerone.*
26. De Iacobo, Marco et Iohanne euangelista.	*De Iacobo, Marco et Iohanne euangelista.*
27. De persecutione sub Traiano.	*De persecutione sub Traiano.*
28. De Adriano et adinventionibus hereticorum et passione sancti Policarpi atque Iustini.	**De Adriano et adinventionibus hereticorum et passione sancti Policarpi atque Iustini**
29. De sancto Photino, Hirineo vel reliquis martyribus Lugdunensibus.	**De sancto Photino, Hirineo vel reliquis martyribus Lugdunensibus**
30. De septem viris in Galleis ad praedicandum missis.	*De septem viris in Galleis ad praedicandum missis.*
31. De aecclesia Biturgia.	**De aecclesia Biturgia.**
32. De Chroco et de delubro Arverno.	*De Chroco et de delubro Aruerno.*
33. De martiribus qui circa Arvernum passi sunt.	**De martiribus qui circa Arvernum passi sunt**
34. De sancto Privato martyre.	**De sancto Privato martyre**
35. De Quirino episcopo et martyre.	**De Quirino episcopo et martyre**
36. De nativitate sancti Martini et crucis inventione.	**De nativitate sancti Martini et crucis inventione**
37. De Iacobo Nisebeno episcopo.	**De Iacobo Nisebeno episcopo**
38. De transitu Antonii monachi.	**De transitu Antonii monachi**
39. De adventum sancti Martini.	*De adventu sancti Martini.*
40. De Melanea matron.	*De Melanea matrona.*
41. De interitu Valentis imperatoris.	*De interitu Ualentis imperatoris.*[1]
42. De imperio Theudosi.	*De imperio Theudosi.*[2]
43. De interitum Maximi tirrani.	*De interitum Maximi tiranni.*
44. De Orbico Arvernorum episcopo.	
45. De sancto Hillidio episcopo.	
46. De Nepotiano atque Arthemio episcopis.	
47. De castitate amantium.	
48. De transitu sancti Martini.	*De transitu sancti Martini.*

relative of the founders,[74] and one of the driving forces behind the early Carolingian reforms under Pippin III.[75] The monastery stayed in close contact with the bishopric under Chrodegang's successor Angilram, who took over the see in 769. Angilram, like his predecessor, had close connections with the Carolingian court, and after the death of Fulrad of Saint Denis in 784 he was in charge of the royal chancery.[76] Lorsch's close connections with the Carolingian court were not just mediated through the bishops of Metz; the Carolingian rulers themselves took the monastery under their protection. Consequently Lorsch became one of the wealthiest and most important monasteries in the Frankish kingdoms and at the same time one of the most influential cultural centres of the Carolingian reforms.[77] The close connections to both centres, the bishopric of Metz and the Carolingian court, is demonstrated by the script in which the new version of Gregory's histories was written: the older Lorsch style. This script is so similar to the minuscule used at Metz and the Carolingian court that Bischoff even regarded it as a product of the interaction and exchange of scribes and scholars among these three cultural centres.[78]

These close connections between Metz and Lorsch might well have been one of the backgrounds for the creation of a new Church history in Lorsch. At precisely the time when the Lorsch historians compiled the new *historia ecclesiastica*, members of the *ecclesia* in Metz reworked the shared history of the bishopric and its Carolingian rulers. In doing so they replaced an emphasis on a Frankish-Trojan past with a Gregorian Christian vision of community, defined by descent from saintly ancestors in Southern Gaul. About three decades earlier, bishop Angilram of Metz had instructed the Lombard scholar Paul the Deacon, who was then residing in the Carolingian kingdom, to draw up a

74 Cf. Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge, 2000), 18; Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY, 1999), 99–100; Richard Corradini, "Lorsch," in *RGA*, 2nd ed., vol. 18 (Berlin and New York, 2001), 608–611, here 610–611.

75 Martin Claussen, *The Reform of the Frankish Church: Chrodegang of Metz and the* regula canonicorum *in the Eighth Century* (Cambridge, 2004), 19–57.

76 Wattenbach, Levison and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, 2: 251; but see the discussion in Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge, 2008), 44–47, with n. 163; Nikolaus Häring, "Angilram," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 1 (Munich and Zürich,1980), col. 635; Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, 124–127.

77 Josef Semmler, "Die Geschichte der Abtei Lorsch von der Gründung bis zum Ende der Salierzeit 764 bis 1125," in *Die Reichsabtei Lorsch. Festschrift zum Gedenken an ihre Stiftung 764*, (ed.) Friedrich Knöpp, 2 vols (Darmstadt, 1973), 1: 75–174.

78 Bischoff, *Die Abtei Lorsch*, 36.

history of the bishops of Metz.[79] In his work, Paul linked the spiritual family of the bishops of Metz to the Carolingian family through the figure of Arnulf of Metz. Arnulf one of the most powerful magnates in Austrasia had been one of the supporters of Chlothar's takeover and had later become bishop of Metz. In his *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* Paul presented Arnulf as a Carolingian ancestor emphasizing that he was a descendant of a most noble and powerful Frankish family, "ex nobilissimo fortissimoque Francorum stemate (!) ortus."[80]

Soon after the beginning of the 9th century and the coronation of Charlemagne as Roman emperor, genealogists of the *ecclesia* of Metz decided to reorganize the familial bonds with the Carolingians in a new *Commemoratio genealogiae*.[81] Otto Gerhard Oexle has convincingly argued that this text was written between 800 and 814 as a literary attempt on the part of the *ecclesia* of Metz to end the vacancy of the see since the death of Angilram in 791. The emphasis on both the old and new familial bonds between the Carolingians and the bishops of Metz sought to remind the emperor of his particular responsibility to the bishopric.[82]

In order to emphasize the emperor's accountability for these bonds, the authors of the *Commemoratio* built upon the main elements of the genealogy written by Paul the Deacon, focusing on Arnulf as the most important link between the church of Metz and the Carolingians. In contrast to Paul, however, they did not associate the Carolingians with the Franks' Trojan origins or emphasize any common Frankish past. Instead, the commemoration presents Arnulf as the grandson of Ansbertus, a member of a noble senatorial family of southern Gaul – "ex genere senatorum".[83] It is very likely that Gregory of Tours,

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79   See Walter Pohl, "Paulus Diaconus und die 'Historia Langobardorum': Text und Tradition," in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, (eds.) Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 32 (Vienna and Munich, 1994), 375–405; and now the new edition and translation of Paulus Diaconus, *Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus*, (ed.) and trans. Damien Kempf (Dallas, 2013). I am very grateful to Damien Kempf who sent me the manuscript before it was published. Cf. also Patzold, *Episcopus*, 113–116.

80   Paulus Diaconus, *Liber*, (ed.) Kempf, 70; and the introduction, 10–13; cf. Ian Wood, "Genealogy Defined by Women: The Case of the Pippinids," in *Gender in the Early Medieval Word: East and West*, (eds.) Leslie Brubaker and Julia Smith (Cambridge, 2004), 234–256.

81   Ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 13 (Hanover, 1881), 245–246; the best and most comprehensive discussion is still Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Die Karolinger und die Stadt des heiligen Arnulf," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 1 (1967), 250–364; see also Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, 115–116; Wood, "Genealogy," 235–236.

82   Oexle, "Die Karolinger," 279–280, 345.

83   *Commemoratio Genealogiae*, (ed.) Waitz, 245–246.

who had used that phrase again and again in his Histories, inspired this formulation.[84] The senatorial kin that the text claims for Arnulf is then described in greater detail: it turns out to have included a number of saints and bishops from southern Gaul who also played an important role in Gregory's *Histories*.[85]

It may well be that the historians of Lorsch provided the historiographical background for this relatively brief commemoration through their compilation of the Lorsch *historia ecclesiastica*. Both texts built on the many stories and episodes about the history of southern Gaul found in Gregory's *Histories*, and both deployed them in near identical ways. In fact, the Lorsch compilers seem to have created exactly the history that the Metz genealogists required. Specifically, they replaced belief in the Trojan and Frankish descent of the Carolingians and bishops of Metz with a narrative of senatorial and saintly ancestry from Aquitaine. By extending the narrative of the Fredegar Chronicle and its respective continuations, they also incorporated Gregory's vision into the framework of the Carolingian Frankish *regnum*.

In doing so, the compilers not only declared the common origins of the Carolingians and the family of the bishops of Metz, but they also connected this common past to a specific vision of *historia ecclesiastica* and the formation of a shared Christendom. Their emphasis on the church of Gaul as the subject of this history constituted a moral demand that the future of the *regnum Francorum* be safeguarded through its continual care for this specific corner of Christendom. Like Gregory, they deemed it the duty of rulers to maintain and strengthen the *religio*. Yet unlike Gregory, by continuing his vision with a narrative that extended to the death of Charles Martel, they made the Carolingian *regnum Francorum* the political framework for achieving this moral demand.

Associating this embodiment of Christendom with the Frankish name surely went against everything Gregory ever wanted. But the Lorsch compilers were not arguing against Gregory. Just like the Merovingian compilers before them, they tried to extrapolate his vision within the changed circumstances of the Carolingian Empire. With the expansion of Carolingian rule over half of Europe, the Franks asserted themselves ever more forcefully as representatives of the one true manifestation of Christendom (in the sense elaborated by Peter Brown) against other forms of Christian belief.[86] From the end of the 8th century onwards, questions

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84   Heinzelmann, *Gregory*, 7–29.

85   Oexle, "Die Karolinger," 279; see also Eugen Ewig, "L'Aquitaine et les pays Rhénans au haut moyen âge," in idem, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*, Beihefte der Francia 3/1 (Munich, 1976), 1: 553–572; Wilhelm Levison, "Metz und Südfrankreich im frühen Mittelalter," in idem, *Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit* (Düsseldorf, 1947), 139–163.

86   Brown, *Rise*, esp. 220–266.

of compatibility and convergence between these diverse Christian traditions prompted intensified theological disputes in the Carolingian Empire.[87] The more firmly Charlemagne believed the solution to this question was to present himself as *pastor*, *praedicator gentium* and patron of the Christian Church, the more intransigent these debates became.[88]

Gregory's *Histories* were used to frame both the history and present condition of the Carolingian church and state far beyond Lorsch and Metz. From the early 9th century the *Histories* circulated widely in the Carolingian world. Including the Lorsch manuscript, we possess eight manuscript witnesses from the 9th century alone, six of which can be dated to the first half of the 9th century.[89] Apart from the Lorsch manuscript, however, the earliest copies are all fragments. Hence, we do not know if they all included the same selection of chapters or produced different rearrangements of the text. However, the Carolingian manuscripts that do contain a complete text of the Carolingian version suggest that future compilers possessed a high degree of editorial latitude when adapting the arrangement of the *Histories* to different interests and circumstances. Although their compilers all reorganised Gregory's ten books according to the model used in the Lorsch manuscript – that is, by transforming

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87   Mayke de Jong, "Charlemagne's Church," in *Charlemagne: Empire and Society*, (ed.) Joanna Story (Manchester, 2005), 103–35; eadem, "Religion," in *The Early Middle Ages 400–1000*, (ed.) Rosamond McKitterick (Oxford, 2001), 131–161; Michel Lauwers, "Le glaive et la parole: Charlemagne, Alcuin et le modèle du rex praedicator. Notes d'ecclésiologie carolingienne," in *Alcuin de York à Tours: Écriture, pouvoir et réseaux dans l'Europe du haut moyen âge*, (eds.) Philippe Depreux and Bruno Judic (Rennes, 2004), 221–244; Maximilian Diesenberger, *Sermones: Predigt und Politik im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern* (forthcoming); Florence Close, *Uniformiser la foi pour unifier l'empire: Contribution à l'histoire de la pensée politico-théologique de Charlemagne* (Bruxelles, 2011).

88   McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, 136.

89   Heidelblerg, Univ. bibl. lat. 864 (C1 in the classification of Bruno Krusch); Munich, Clm 29087 (C1*, probably region of Mainz, second quarter of the 9th century), Copenhagen, Bibl. reg. "Ny kgl. Saml.," 252b (C1**, Eastern France/Western Germany 2nd quarter of the 9th century); Copenhagen, Bibl. Univ. Rostgaard 160 2° nr. 1 (C1***, Tours, beginning of the 9th century), Saint Petersburg, Acad. of Sciences MS 2/625 (Tours, beginning of the 9th century); Wolfenbüttel, Bibl. Herzog August, Aug. 2° 10.9 (Tours, beginning of the 9th century), cf. Heinzelmann and Bourgain, "L'œuvre," 287–289; Pascale Bourgain, "Gregorius Turonensis ep.," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del medioevo: Medieval texts and Their Transmission*. Texts and Transmission 1, (eds.) Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi, Millenio medievale 50, Strumenti e studi n.s. 8 (Firenze, 2005), 152–161; with further references. See also Vladimir Mazhuga, "La tradition Carolingienne tourangelle des Histoires des Gregoire des Tours, vue à travers des fragments de Saint Pétersbourg, Copenhague et Wolfenbüttel," *Scriptorium* 62 (2008), 113–121.

the text into nine books and adding the Fourth Book of the *Chronicle* of Fredegar and its Continuations as their Book 10 – they all transmit different selections from Gregory's text.

In some cases this adaptation and adoption of the text went on for a while. A manuscript most likely compiled at Echternach around 900, now Paris BN lat. 9765, shows the same traces of continuous reworking and rearrangement found in the Lorsch manuscript. Some of the additions to the text were, as they were in Lorsch, made through the insertion of additional pages. This work on the reorganisation of the text, however, was also not only continued at different times but also at different places. Some of the additional pages were included most likely in Rheims.[90]

15.3.2   *From Metz to Liège: The Reworking of Gregory's Histories at Saint Hubert*

The constant reworking of the text is also documented by the second oldest extant manuscript of the Carolingian edition of Gregory of Tours. This manuscript was written around the middle of the 9th century at the monastery of Saint Hubert in the Ardennes.[91] By comparing the Saint Hubert manuscript with the *Historia ecclesiastica* from Lorsch, significant differences with regard to the selections from stories about bishops and saints from the south of Gaul become apparent. While the Lorsch compilers were more interested in Gregory's stories about Clermont than the church history of Tours, the editorial selections made by their colleagues at Saint Hubert illustrates a move in the opposite direction. Rather, they decided to skip the chapters on Clermont and included some others on Tours. I have not been able to identify instances of the Saint Hubert compilers' specific interests in the history of Tours, but it is clear that the version produced at Saint Hubert represents an equally deliberate selection from the chapters of Gregory's *Histories*.

The table of contents in the manuscript of Saint Hubert also reveals careful and deliberate work on a new edition of the text. Unlike most manuscripts of Gregory's *Histories*, where the table of contents of the single books were copied at the beginning of each book, the compilers at Saint Hubert provided a comprehensive list of all the selected chapters at the beginning of their manuscript. There are only a few inconsistencies regarding the numbering of the

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90   Heinzelmann and Bourgain, "L'œuvre," 288; Michele Camillo Ferrari, *Sancti Willibrordi venerantes memoriam: Echternacher Schreiber und Schriftsteller von den Angelsachsen bis Johann Bertels* (Luxembourg, 1994), 71 n. 393.

91   Namur, BM 11; cf. Heinzelmann and Bourgain, "L'œuvre," 288.

chapters. As the list was written on a separate quire it could well have served as a guide for the copyists, which, if so, they indeed followed.[92]

The compilers at Saint Hubert seem – like their colleagues at Lorsch – to have used different available versions of Gregory's *Histories*. The library possessed a (more) complete version of the *Histories* that contains a great number of marginal notes (in different hands) noting *hic deest* at passages where chapters had been left out.[93] They used these different versions not only to check the copied text, but also to compile and critically review their selections from the *Histories*.

One of the most interesting examples of this process is found at the beginning of *Hist.* 2.9, which contains a lengthy discussion of the absence of reliable sources for an early history of the Franks and their kings. Gregory began the chapter claiming, "Many people do not know who the first king of the Franks was" and continued the next sentence with a presentation and discussion of the sources: "While the History of Sulpicius Alexander tells us a lot about them [the Franks], he does not at all provide a name for their first king".[94] However, the Merovingian six-book version transmits a slightly altered version of the passage (marked here in boldface): *non tamen regem primum eorum **ualentinus** nominat.* The new reading may simply have been a scribal error – made in the copy from which all the extant manuscripts of the six-book version derive. But some readers might well have read the passage as a statement by Gregory that none of the sources had mentioned the name of the first king of the Franks, Valentinus. The editors of Saint Hubert used a version of the passage that was closer to the text Gregory had once written and copied *ullatinus*: *non tamen regem primum eorum* ullatinus *nominat.* But a corrector of the text clearly preferred the reading that he must have found in another exemplar. With a few extra strokes he corrected *ullatinus* to *ualentius* (see Fig. 15.2).

Similarities between the compilations of Gregory's *Histories* at Lorsch and Saint Hubert are not only evident in their use of different readings and versions to perform careful editorial work. They also posit a similar set of connections among a monastic center, an important bishopric and the history of the Carolingian family. Just as the monastery of Lorsch possessed a close connection to the bishopric of Metz, so the monastery of Saint Hubert was closely

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92   Namur, BM, fos. 61r–68v.

93   E.g. fol. 91r (cf. below, p. 553, with n. 105), 115r (*Hist.* 4.5–7), 119r (*Hist.* 4.25), 121r (*Hist.* 4.33–37 and 4.39); 130v (*Hist.* 5.8) the annotator checked only the first six books but did not mark all the omitted chapters.

94   *Hist.* 2.9: "De vero Francorum regibus quis fuerit primus a multis ignoratur ... non tamen regem primum eorum ullatinus nominat."
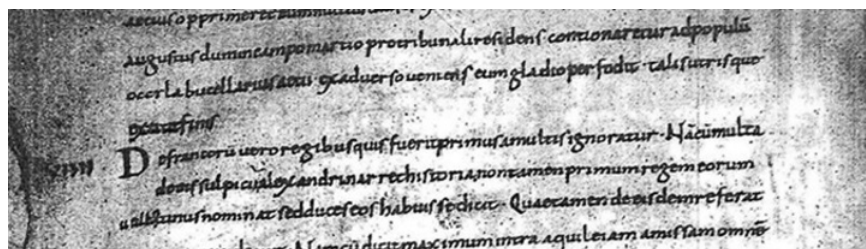
FIGURE 15.2   *Correction of ullatinus to ualentinus, beginning of line 3 of* Hist. 2.9 (*Namur, BM 11, fol. 85v*)

linked to the bishopric of Liège.[95] Liège was not an old bishopric. It had only become the seat of a bishop under the early Carolingians. But its bishop was not only the bishop of the old Carolingian heartlands but also the bishop of the Carolingian palace of Aachen, which had been established by Charlemagne as one of the centres of political life in the Carolingian empire.[96]

The history of the monastery of Saint Hubert shared close ties to the Carolingian past as well. The foundation of the monastery *Andagium* had been supported by Pippin II and his wife Plectrud.[97] At the beginning of the 9th century, the monastery was reformed and received a new name – Saint Hubert – on the occasion of the translation of the relics of the saint to the monastery.[98] The oldest *vita* of Hubert, composed in the second half of the 8th century, remembered him as a member of Pippin II's family and a close ally of Charles Martel by emphasizing his veneration by Charles Martel's successors.[99]

95   Satoshi Tada, "The Creation of a Religious Center: Christianisation in the Diocese of Liège," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54/2 (2003), 209–227; Alain Dierkens, "La christianisation des campagnes de l'empire de Louis le Pieux: l'exemple de diocese de Liège sous l'épiscopate de Walcaud (c. 809–c. 831)," in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious*, (eds.) Roger Collins and Peter Godman (Oxford, 1990), 309–327.

96   Janet Nelson, "Aachen as a Place of Power," in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, (eds.) Mayke de Jong, Frans Theuws, and Carine van Rhijn, (Leiden, 2001), 217–242.

97   See Matthias Werner, *Der Lütticher Raum in frühkarolingischer Zeit*: *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte einer karolingischen Stammlandschaft*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 62 (Göttingen, 1980), 424, with n. 99.

98   Tada, "Creation."

99   *Vita Huberti episcopi Traiectensis*, (ed.) Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM 6 (Hanover, 1913), 471–496; Werner, *Der Lütticher Raum*, 309–312; and see Gerda Heydemann, "Text und Translation: Strategien zur Mobilisierung spiritueller Ressource im Frankenreich Ludwigs des Frommen," in *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Historiographie und Hagiographie im Spannungsfeld von Edition und Kompendienüberlieferung*, (eds.) Richard Corradini and Maximilian Diesenberger, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 15 (Vienna, 2010), 67–78; and Patzold, *Episcopus*, 301–344, 307–322.

Like the genealogists in Metz, the authors of the oldest *vita* of Hubert utilized similar strategies to highlight their bonds to the family of the Carolingian rulers. The many textual parallels between the *Life of Hubert* and the *Life of Arnulf of Metz* are surely no coincidence.[100]

In the second half of the 9th century, interest in the models and strategies developed in Metz and Lorsch might well have intensified at Liège and Saint Hubert under the episcopate of Franco, who was bishop of Liège from 856 to 903. Franco was also one of the main patrons of the Irish scholar and poet Sedulius Scotus, who referred to Franco in one of his poems as *Karolides* – that is, a member of the Carolingian family. Sedulius also declared that Franco had been educated by another member of the Carolingian family, the half-brother of the emperor Louis the Pious, Drogo, who was bishop of Metz from 823 to 855. Drogo's interest in the Aquitanian origins of the bishops of Metz and the Carolingian family are well documented in the continuation and expansion of the bishops' genealogy during his episcopacy.[101] Franco must have been well acquainted with the ideas and ideology behind the creation of the *historia ecclesiastica* at Lorsch and the *genealogia domni Arnulfi* at Metz. It is therefore very likely that he too built on the episcopal genealogy of the Carolingian family and the prestige of their saintly ancestors from Aquitaine to legitimise his position as a worthy successor to his royal and episcopal ancestors. In addition, the claim that Saint Hubert himself was of Aquitanian descent may have originated in the very same context (although our oldest extant evidence comes only from the 12th century).[102]

The close connection between the monastic community at Saint Hubert and the bishops of Liège may help explain the edition of Gregory's *Histories* produced at the monastery in the Ardennes. Unlike Metz, however, the bishopric of Liège did not seem to have quite as specific connections to the churches and cults of Aquitaine. This in turn may explain why the Saint Hubert edition reflects a more vague interest in the prestige of saintly and episcopal ancestors, instead focusing on the prestigious and most solemn church of Saint Martin at Tours than on the history of the church of Clermont.

However, unlike their colleagues at Lorsch, the compilers of Saint Hubert showed more concern for the early history of the Franks. The manuscript is our earliest extant copy of the *Histories* of Gregory that transmits the name of the Franks in its title. After a quire that features the comprehensive list of chapters,

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100   Walter Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil* 2: *Merowingische Biographie, Italien, Spanien und die Inseln im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1988), 65.

101   Oexle, "Karolinger," 345–351.

102   Werner, *Der Lütticher Raum*, 277 with n. 18.

the text begins on a new page with the title: "In nomine domini ihu xpi incipit liber historiarum gesta Francorum."[103] This effort to present Gregory's *Histories* as *Gesta Francorum* seemingly influenced the specific compilation of the text in the manuscript. For example, the story of the baptism of Clovis is copied up to Gregory's comparison of the first Christian Frankish king to the first Christian Roman emperor Constantine.[104] After Gregory's remark that Clovis advanced like a new Constantine ("procedit novus Constantinus") a long passage is left out, and the text continues with Clovis' campaign against the Arian Burgundian kings.[105] In their rearrangement of the *Histories*, the compilers at Saint Hubert thus presented the war against the heretical Burgundians as the logical consequence of the king's recent conversion to Nicene Christianity. At the same time, the compilers of Saint Hubert suppressed Gregory's comment that, through his baptism, Clovis had been washed clean of the leprosy and dirt of paganism.[106] The compilers also suppressed this aspect of Frankish history at another place in the *Histories*, as they cut the chapter immediately following Gregory's lengthy discussion of the impossibility of writing a history of the Franks before their arrival in Gaul. In this chapter Gregory had discussed the paganism of the Franks at length, using many biblical quotations to lament that the Franks had no prophets and teachers like the people of Israel, and hence could not receive God's words as the chosen people had through Moses, Habakuk, and David.[107]

While the careful edition of these passages did not escape the attention of readers of this manuscript at St Hubert, the main focus for later readers seems to have been the combination of Carolingian Frankish history with the long past of Christianity in southern Gaul. As Alain Dierkens has observed, the *Ten Books of Histories* at Saint Hubert was likely one of the main sources of the *Life of Beregisel* by Abbot Frederic (†942). In his *vita* of the monastery's founder, Frederic strongly emphasized Beregisel's close links to the ancestors of the Carolingians, the Pippinids, crediting the support of the powerful mayor Pippin II for the foundation of the monastery.[108] Many marginal notes – in

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103   Namur, BM 11, fol. 69r.

104   *Hist.* II, 31.

105   *Hist.* II, 32, Namur, BM. 11, fol. 91r. The remark "hic deest" in the margin shows that the readers of this manuscript did not only check the chapters but actually read the text itself.

106   Namur, BM 11, fol. 91r.; *Hist.* II, 31, 77: "Procedit novus Constantinus ad lavacrum. Deleturus leprae veteris morbum sordentesque maculas gestas antiquitas recenti latice deleturus."

107   Namur, BM. 11, fol. 86r, cf. *Hist.* II, 10.

108   Alain Dierkens, "Note sur un passage de la Vie de saint Bérégise (B.H.L. 1180)," in *Luxembourg en Lotharingie: Luxemburg im lotharingischen Raum. Mélanges Paul Margue*, (eds.) Paul Dostert et al. (Luxembourg, 1993), 101–111; idem, "L'auter de la Vita sancti Bergisi

different hands from the 10th and 11th centuries – show a continued interest in the Gregory-Fredegar-compilation at Saint Hubert.[109] This integration of the spiritual and social topography of early Christian Gaul into the Carolingian rise to power clearly interested many generations of readers at the monastery of Saint Hubert.

15.3.3   *Western Christendom as Viewed from Rheims: The Historiographical Compendium of Saint Bertin*

A similar selection and arrangement of Gregory's text can also be found in a later manuscript of the Carolingian version of Gregory of Tours' *Histories*. Just like the compilations of Lorsch and St Hubert the nine books of Gregory's Histories is followed by a tenth consisting of the Fourth Book of the Fredegar's *Chronicle* and its Continuations until the death of Charles Martel. However, this narrative was embedded in a large historiographical compendium whose historical narrative reached from the foundation of Rome until the late 9th century. It is very likely that this history book was compiled in the last decades of the 9th century, but the extant manuscript is a later copy written at Saint Bertin at the end of the 10th century.[110] Without doubt, it is the most spectacular example of the rearrangement of Gregory's *Histories*. It omitted chapters in whole, and substituted them again and again with passages from the *Liber historiae Francorum*. The compilers of this version did not simply excise Gregory's chapter on the paganism of the Franks. Indeed, they replaced it with the Frankish origin myth from the *Liber historiae Francorum,* which described the Franks as descendants of the heroes of Troy.[111]

Of course, this origin myth contradicted the conclusions of Gregory's research in the preceding chapter of the *Histories*. However, the compilers used the concluding paragraph of that chapter, in which Gregory mentioned stories that circulated ("Tradunt enim multi"). In Gregory's text the passage

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abbatis (BHL 1180): Frédéric, prévot de Gorze puis abbé de Saint-Hubert (†942)," in *Scribere sanctorum gesta: Recueil d'études d'hagiographie médiévale offert à Guy Philippart,* (eds.) Étienne Renard, Michel Trigalet, Xavier Hermand, and Paul Betrand (Turnhout, 2005), 417–440.

109   The marginal notes and signs increase significantly in Book 10 which is in this edition of the *Histories* just as in the other Carolingian versions the Fourth Book of the Fredegar-Chronicle with the first 24 chapters of the Continuations.

110   Saint Omer, BM 697+706, Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'oeuvre," 288; *Annales de Saint-Bertin,* (eds.) Felix Grat (†), Jeanne Vielliard, Suzanne Clémencet (Paris, 1964), xxii–xxxviii; and Janet Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin* (Manchester, 1991), 15.

111   Saint Omer, BM 706, fol. 21ra–23vb.

showed once again that the Franks had no kings before their crossing of the Rhine.

> Now many say that they left Pannonia and first inhabited the banks of the river Rhine. From there they crossed the Rhine and traversed Thuringia; and then they set over themselves in the territories and cities long haired kings, from their first, and as I would say, more noble family.[112]

The compilers of this edition of Gregory's *Histories* copied the preceding words, and after a short transitional clause, they continued the narrative with the origin myth found in the *Liber historiae Francorum*:

> Let us set forth the beginnings of the kings of the Franks, their own origins as well as their deeds.[113]

After the arrival and settlement of the Franks in Central Europe – in the *Meotides paludes* where according to the *Liber historiae Francorum* they had founded the city Sicambria – the compilers switched back to Gregory's text. Like the compilers at St Hubert they skipped *Hist.* 2.10 on the paganism of the early Franks and turned instead to Gregory's account of the short but nevertheless embarrassing reign of the Gallic emperor Avitus (*Hist.* 2.11). After the end of this section they again continued the history of the early Franks with selections from the *Liber historiae Francorum*, narrating their fight with the Romans, their migration to the East, their crossing of the Rhine and conquest of Cambrai and other cities in northern France, and the reign of king Merowech, the *heros eponymus* of the Merovingian kings.[114] It is only with Merowech's son Childeric, the father of the first Christian king Clovis, that the compilers returned to Gregory's narrative.

The compilers of this manuscript similarly rearranged the narrative of Clovis' baptism, the key moment in the history of the Frankish *regnum*. By doing so, they again relied upon excerpts from the *Liber historiae Francorum*.

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112   *Hist.* 2.9; passage beginning, "Tradunt enim multi."

113   Saint Omer, BM 706, fol. 20vb – its additions marked in italics: "Tradunt enim multi, eosdem *Francos*, de Pannonia fuisse digressos, et primum quidem littora Rheni amnis incoluisse, dehinc, transacto Rheno, Thoringiam transmeasse, ibique iuxta pagus vel civitates reges crinitos super se creavisse. *De quibus et nos pauca dicemus* [= a transition to the beginning of the *Liber historiae Francorum* c. 1]: Principium regum Francorum eorumque originem ac gesta proferamus."

114   *LHF* 2–6, Saint Omer BM 706, fols. 21rb–22rb.

Like the compendium from Saint Hubert, the Saint Bertin compilation deliberately excluded Gregory's characterization of Clovis' pagan prehistory. In its place, it substituted a passage from the *Liber historiae Francorum*, which stated that the whole people of the Franks – "cunctus populus Francorum" – were baptized. The rest of the chapter is missing, as in the manuscript from Saint Hubert, but the wars against the Arian Burgundian kings were told with additional help from the *Liber historiae Francorum*.

Analysis of the two passages might help to illustrate the finesse with which the compilers chose and arranged the compendium's text. These editors did far more than simply insert some additional elements of early Frankish history into their narrative. As their rearrangement of Clovis' story shows, they were above all concerned with stories regarding the spiritual and ecclesiastical sources of identity in the Frankish kingdoms.[115] As in the other Carolingian editions discussed above, the rewriting of Gregory's *Histories* in the Saint Bertin manuscript constitutes an effort to redefine the horizons of Western Christianity through the history of a specifically Frankish Christendom.

This becomes clearer when one considers the larger historical narrative into which this version of Gregory's *Histories* was embedded. In the original manuscript, the edition of the *Histories* formed part of a much larger historiographical compendium, which is today divided into several codices.[116] This compendium began with Eutropius' *De urbe condita* and stretched from the founding of the city of Rome to the history of the Carolingian Empire at the end of the 9th century. The narrative of Eutropius concludes at the beginning of the reign of the Roman emperor Valentinian I (364), and is continued by the Chronicle of Marcellinus Comes (a work composed in the first half of the 6th century). Marcellinus Comes is followed in turn by a version of the *Notitia Galliarum*, a list of Gallic Provinces and towns compiled sometime around the end of the 4th century and the beginning of the fifth.[117] In the Middle Ages, the *Notitia* circulated widely as a list of metropolises and bishoprics, and was frequently reworked and brought up to date.[118]

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115   I am preparing a larger study on the Carolingian editions of Gregory's *Histories*.

116   Saint Omer, BM 697 and 706, and Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 15835, cf. the introduction to *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, xxii–xxxii.

117   Eutropius, *Breviarium ab urbe condita, Kurze Geschichte Roms seit Gründung: 753 v. Chr.-364 n. Chr.: Einleitung, Text und Übersetzung*, (ed.) Friedhelm L. Müller (Stuttgart, 1995); Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, (ed.) and trans. by Brian Croke, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus* (Sydney, 1995); see Brian Croke, *Count Marcellinus and his Chronicle* (Oxford, 2001).

118   *Notitia Galliarum*, (ed.) Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA 9 (Berlin, 1892), 552–612; Jill Harries, "Church and State in the Notitia Galliarum," *Journal of Roman Studies* 68 (1978), 26–73; and see below, Map 1.

After this outline of the late antique topography of the Gallic church appears the edition of Gregory's *Histories* with the Fourth Book of Fredegar's *Chronicle* and its Carolingian Continuations until the reign of Charles Martel (714–741). Then the *Royal Frankish Annals* begin. They begin with the history of the sons of Charles Martel, their succession, and the Carolingian takeover of the royal office under Pippin III in the middle of the 8th century. After Pippin's death in 768 they continue to recount the triumphal success of his son, Charlemagne, the expansion of Frankish rule over most of Western and Central Europe, the renovation of the Roman empire under Charlemagne, and the history of his son, the emperor Louis the Pious, until the year 829.

The perceptual grid used for this endeavour was not genealogical in structure, but rather annalistic.[119] The ordering of the past in annalistic fashion was no Carolingian invention. Instead, it was most likely derived from Roman annalistic accounts like Eutropius' breviary *Ab urbe condita*.[120] But in the Carolingian *renovatio*, years were counted from the beginning of the new Christian era with the birth of Christ. The historical narrative was integrated into a Calendar of Triumph, in which the triumph of Christianity was directly linked to the triumph of the Carolingian family. This connection was projected into an annalistic vision that was knitted into the seams of an endlessly expandable story.

The historiographical compendium from Saint Bertin is indeed one of the few transmissions of the *Royal Frankish Annals* that continues its narrative after the conclusion of the *Annals* in 829 with yet another annalistic text: the so-called *Annals of Saint Bertin*.[121] These *Annals* actually received their name from their transmission in this manuscript – a manuscript that their modern editor, Georg Waitz, regarded as the 'best' transmission of the text.[122] With the start of the narrative in 830, the text began as an attempt to continue the perspective first put forward by the *Royal Frankish Annals*.[123] After the 840s,

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119 For perceptual grids in historiographical writing see, Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore/London, 1997), 99–110.

120 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, pp 84–119; Sarah Foot, "Annals and Chronicles in Western Europe," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing* 2, 400–1400, (eds.) eadem and Chase Robinson (Oxford, 2012), 346–367.

121 See Patzold, *Episcopus*, 396–409.

122 Georg Waitz, "Über die Überlieferung der Annales Bertiniani," *Sitzungsberichte der Königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Phil.-hist. Classe.* (1883), 113–121.

123 On the break in the history of the *Royal Frankish Annals* after 829 see Helmut Reimitz, "Nomen Francorum obscuratum: Zur Krise der fränkischen Identität zwischen der kurzen

however, bishop Prudentius in Troyes, who gave the *Annals* more of a local or regional perspective, continued the narrative. After the death of Prudentius in 861 no less than Hincmar of Rheims (d. 882) took up the continuation of the *Annals*. Hincmar was not only one of the most productive intellectuals and theologians in the Carolingian world, but – just like Gregory of Tours 300 years before him – as bishop of Rheims he was deeply involved in the political and social fabric of the Carolingian empire and kingdoms.[124]

When Hincmar died in 882, no one continued the annalistic project. In the compendium, the *Annals* are followed by a charter of archbishop Odalric, who was bishop of Rheims from 962 to 969.[125] The extant manuscript Saint Omer 706 ends with this charter. But in his work on the new edition of the *Annals of Saint Bertin*, Felix Grat discovered a manuscript in Brussels that also originally formed part of the compendium. This manuscript transmits an excerpt from Bede's *World Chronicle*, followed by the *Chronicon Laurissense Breve* and finally the *Annales Vedastini*. In the compendium they were originally placed after the charter of Odalric.[126] These texts were all transmitted in a compendium produced at Saint Vaast at the end of the 11th century, and they were also used by the compilers of the *Chronicon Vedastinum*.[127] As Felix Grat has shown in his comparison of the texts in the two manuscripts, the younger witness from Saint Vaast is a direct copy of the older one from Saint Bertin.[128] The inclusion of the texts following the charter of Odalric, especially the *Annales Vedastini*, suggests that the extant compendium was the result of cooperation between historians at Saint Bertin and Saint Vaast, who likely expanded upon a compendium that had come from Rheims with the charter of Odalric at its end.

However, the original composition of this compendium at Rheims seems to have significantly predated the time Odalric. More than a century ago, Friedrich

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und langen Geschichte der *Annales regni Francorum*," in *Völker, Reiche, Namen im Mittelalter*, (eds.) Matthias Becher and Stefanie Dick, Mittelalter Studien 22 (Paderborn, 2011), 279–296.

124   Martina Stratmann, *Hinkmar von Reims als Verwalter von Bistum und Kirchenprovinz*, Quellen und Forschungen zum Recht im Mittelalter 6 (Sigmaringen, 1991); for Hincmar and Gregory, cf. Janet Nelson, "The Merovingian Church in Carolingian Retrospect," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, 241–259; on Hincmar see also the monumental study by Jean Devisse, *Hincmar, Archevêque de Reims*, 845–892, 3 vols (Genf, 1975–76).

125   See Eduard Hlawitschka, "Zur Lebensgeschichte Erbischof Odelrichs von Reims," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* NS 70 (1961), 1–20.

126   See *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, xxii–xxxii.

127   See below, 562–63.

128   See *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii.

Kurze, the editor the *Royal Frankish Annals*, saw in Hincmar of Rheims the *spiritus rector* behind its conception.[129] Although Kurze did not have time to pursue this idea further before his death in World War I,[130] ample evidence suggests that Hincmar, or at least other intellectuals at Rheims who shared his outlook, were responsible for the production of this compendium. As Janet Nelson has shown, Hincmar had already slightly altered the text of the *Annals of Prudentius* from 830 to 861. For example, in the 859 entry he retroactively added a fierce denunciation of the heretic Gottschalk and his pestiferous teaching on the subject of predestination, in order to contradict Prudentius' sympathetic response to Gottschalk.[131]

Similar interventions that are only transmitted in copies of this history book can also be found in other texts. Only in extant copies of this compendium do we find an additional entry to the year 750 of the *Royal Frankish Annals*, which recount the Carolingian takeover of the royal office under Pippin III. According to this entry, after Pippin had been anointed by bishop Bonifatius, he heeded Bonifatius' warning and returned the alienated properties to the church, As Martina Stratmann has shown, Hincmar was greatly concerned with the recovery of alienated church property, not only due to his role as administrator of the Church at Rheims, but also given his status as one of the most eminent pastors of the Frankish kingdoms.[132]

To be sure, Hincmar and his circle at Rheims were not the only ones concerned with the alienation of church property. However, other passages in the compendium suggest that it was conceived by somebody who, like Hincmar, worked constantly to preserve and expand the economic foundations, superior position, and spiritual authority of the bishops of Rheims. In his rewriting of the older *Life of Remigius*, for instance, Hincmar used many passages from the *Liber historiae Francorum*, in particular its first sixteen chapters on the history

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129   Friedrich Kurze, "Über die karolingischen Reichsannalen von 741 bis 829 und ihre Überarbeitung I. Die handschriftlichen Grundlagen," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 19 (1894): 295–329, at 314.

130   Bresslau, Harry, *Geschichte der Monumenta Germaniae historica: im Auftrag der Zentraldirektion*, Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde 42 (Hanover, 1976), 673.

131   Nelson, *Annals*, 14.

132   Stratmann, *Hinkmar von Reims*; Gaëlle Calvet, "Cupiditas, avaritia, turpe lucrum: discours économique et morale chrétienne chez Hincmar de Reims (845–882)," in *Les élites et la richesse au haut moyen âge*, (eds.) Jean-Pierre Devroey, Laurent Feller, and Régine Le Jan, Collection Haut Moyen Âge 10 (Turnhout, 2010), 97–112.

of the Franks.[133] As we have seen, passages and chapters from the *Liber* were also used to interpolate the edition of Gregory's *Histories* transmitted in the manuscript from Saint Bertin. Notably, Hincmar's *Life of Remigius* employed the exact same part of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* that was used to rearrange Gregory's *Histories* in the compendium.[134]

Hincmar's *Life of Remigius* provides us with additional evidence that Hincmar or a member of his circle at Rheims stood behind the conception of this historiographical compendium. The *Life* contains a forged privilege for Remigius from Pope Hormisdas, which Hincmar interpreted as the foundation of the *primatus totius Gallicanae regionis* for Rheims.[135] This may explain why the *Chronicle* of Marcellinus was chosen to narrate the end of Roman rule in the West and the beginning of the post-Roman kingdoms. Although written in Latin, its focus on the East and the Byzantine empire of Justinian is rather clear. Consequently, unlike other late antique continuations of Eusebius-Jerome, this chronicle was rarely copied.[136] But it is also one of the very few chronicles in which Pope Hormisdas is mentioned as the bishop of Rome.[137]

The choice of the *Chronicle* of Marcellinus Comes is indeed striking. Like so many other late antique chronicles, it continued Jerome's own Latin translation and continuation of the Christian world chronicle of Eusebius. But it was the only chronicle to declare explicitly that the Western Roman Empire had come to an end.[138] The arrangement of the chronicle in the compendium – especially

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133 Hincmar, *Vita Remigii*, (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 3 (Hanover, 1896), 239–341; Michel Sot, "Ecrire et réécrire l'histoire de Clovis: De Grégoire de Tours à Hincmar," in *Clovis. Histoire et mémoire*, (ed.) idem, 2 vols (Paris 1997), 2: 157–172; see also Walter Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter* 3: *Karolingische Biographie, 750-920 n. Chr.* (Stuttgart 1991): 365–372.

134 See Bruno Krusch, "Die handschriftlichen Grundlagen der Historia Francorum Gregors von Tours," *Historische Vierteljahresschrift* 27 (1932): 673–723, here 710–711; and *Vita Remigii*, cc. 11–15, 291–297.

135 *Vita Remigii*, c. 20, 312; see Bruno Krusch, "Reimser Remgius Fälschungen", *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 20 (1895), 509–568; Horst Fuhrmann, "Studien zur Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Patriarchate II," *Zeitschrift der Savigny Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung* 40 (1954): 1–84, here 38.

136 Croke, *Count Marcellinus*, 237–256.

137 Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, 38. Out of all three volumes of the Chronica minora compiled by Theodor Mommsen, Hormisdas, aside from in the Chronicon Marcellini, only appears in the chronicle of Victor of Tunnuna.

138 Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, 22 (death of Aetius), 27 (deposition of Romulus Augustulus).

its combination with Eutropius – may help explain the historical ideology that informed the production of this history book. Together with Eutropius' *Ab urbe condita*, the chronicle of Marcellinus presents a narrative structure before the edition of Gregory's *Histories* that clearly matches the structure of the annalistic narratives that follow the edition of Gregory's text in the compendium. But they also underline that the older Roman foundations of this historiographical practice had been developed further. Years were no longer counted from the foundation of Rome, but rather from the beginning of a new Christian era, which started with the birth of Christ. Through this mirroring of the annalistic form, the compilation conveys both the continuation of Roman tradition and its renewal in the Christian kingdom and empire of the Franks. The *urbs* was now the city of God in the Carolingian kingdom.

Gregory's history of a unique Christendom in Gaul played an important role in this notion of the transformation of the Roman world. The *Histories* are placed between the history of the old Empire and the history of the new Frankish empire. But they also demonstrate that the Frankish kingdom became the most important power in the West because it adopted the right kind of Christianity – a narrative that began with the baptism of Clovis by the bishop of Rheims, Remigius. The rearrangement of Gregory's *Histories* in the compendium further underscores the primacy of the bishop of Rheims in the Frankish–Christian *imperium*, and presents Rheims as the Rome of the North.[139] This compendium transmits the most radical extant rearrangement of Gregory's *Histories*. Yet Gregory vision for a Christian future still defined the outlines of its historical drama. The narrative of his *Histories* was further transformed into a *Historia ecclesiastica imperii Francorum*.

This may still have been the message of the compendium three generations after the death of Hincmar, when it was copied with the charter of archbishop Odalric of Rheims at its end. Odalric's allegiances and alliances aptly reflected the compendium's vision of a community shaped by the past of the Carolingian empire and church. Odalric came to Rheims from Metz and seems to have belonged to a family that claimed to be of Carolingian descent.[140] Behind his appointment as archbishop of Rheims stood archbishop Brun, the brother of the East Frankish king and Roman emperor Otto I. He thus belonged to a political network whose prominent members appropriated the Carolingian imperial past to their competition and confrontation with the anti-Carolingian alliance in the West Frankish kingdom, which had another candidate for the episcopate of Rheims. They wanted to reinstate Hugo, a member of the Vermandois family

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139   Nelson, "The Merovingian Church," 241–260.
140   See Hlawitschka, "Zur Lebensgeschichte Erbischof Odelrichs."

who had been appointed as bishop after the deposition of the Carolingian king Charles III.[141] The time of Odalric's episcopate (962–69) is also a time at which intensified interests in historical writing is well documented at Rheims as well as at Saint Bertin. At Rheims it was then that Flodoard of Rheims penned his historical works: the history of the church of Rheims and the annals, which he continued until the year of his death in 966.[142] As Martina Hartmann and Felix Grat have observed, it is very likely that Flodoard worked with an exemplar of the historiographical compendium that ended with Hincmar's Annals.[143] And it is in the early 960s that we have evidence for the intensification of interest in the historical foundations of the monastery of Saint Bertin during a time of disputes about the leadership of the convent. In the winter of 961/62 the young monk Folcuin finished his cartulary chronicle of the monastery.[144]

Ironically, the actual preservation of the compendium resulted from efforts to counter the influence and power of the church of Rheims. The production of the extant compendia with the chronicle of Bede, the *Chronicon Laurissense breve* and the *Annales Vedastini* after the charter of Odalric occurred in the context of establishing a historical argument for appointing an independent bishop at Arras. For a long time Arras had belonged to the diocese of Cambrai, which in turn stood under the metropolitan bishop of Rheims.[145] But Cambrai was also a *Reichsbistum* and belonged to the Empire ruled by the Eastern Frankish king. Arras however was part of the West-Frankish kingdom and came in the course of the 11th century under the influence of the counts of Flanders who became also important patrons of the prestigious and powerful monastery of Saint Vaast. It is thus not surprising that the monks of Saint Vaast supported the separation of their diocese from Cambrai. In order to provide a historical argument for the appointment of an independent bishop in Arras some historians of the monastery of Saint Vaast in Arras compiled the *Chronicon Vedastinum*.

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141   See Ludwig Vones, "Erzbischof Brun von Köln und der Reimser Erzstuhl," in *Von Sacerdotium und regnum- Geistliche und weltliche Gewalt im frühen und hohen Mittelalter. Festschrift für Egon Boshof zum 65. Geburtstag*, (eds.) Franz-Reiner Erkens and Hartmut Wolff (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2002), 325–346.

142   Michel Sot, *Un historien et son église au X siècle: Flodard de Reims* (Paris, 1993); Peter Christian Jacobsen, *Flodoard von Reims: Sein Leben und seine Dichtung, De triumphis Christi'* (Leiden, 1978), 10–11, 54–62, 204; See also the introduction in Flodoard, *Die Geschichte der Reimser Kirche*, (ed.) Martina Hartmann, MGH SS 26 (Hanover, 1998).

143   See Flodoard, *Geschichte*, 13–14; *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, (eds.) Grat et al. xxxix.

144   Laurent Morelle, "Diplomatic Culture and History Writing: Folcuin's Chartulary Chronicle of Saint-Bertin," in *Representing History, 900–1300, Art, Music, History*, (ed.) Robert A. Maxell (Philadelphia, 2010): 53–66.

145   Kéry, *Errichtung*, 287–353.

Their main source was the very historiographical compendium that had once been written at Rheims but was then copied and expanded at Saint Bertin and Saint Vaast.[146] This becomes particularly clear in their use of the *Notitia Galliarum* and its reference to a *civitas Atrebatum* – a bishopric of Arras. The compilers present their quote as evidence taken from the chronicle of *Marcellinus comes* which as we have seen is the text that precedes the relatively short *Notitia Galliarum* in the historiographical compendia of Saint Bertin and Saint Vaast. The efforts behind the uses of these historiographical texts and compendia were indeed successful. At the end of the 11th century an independent Bishop was appointed at Arras by pope Urban II. And the evidence of the *Notitia Galliarum* played an important role in this process.[147]

15.4 Epilogue

For Bruno Krusch, the compendium of Saint Bertin was the "letzte Stufe auf dem Leidenswege des Gregortextes" – the final stage of the suffering of Gregory's *Histories*.[148] It is striking however, that the radical reworking of the *Histories* in this compendium with its far reaching claims for the position of Rheims as the center of Western Christendom has only come down to us in the compendia produced by the historians of Saint Bertin and Saint Vaast to argue for a reestablishment of Arras as independent bishopric. As far as I can see, there is no evidence for a further reception of the two compendia or of the original compendium of Rheims in later times. Perhaps its compilers went too far in their reworking of Gregory's text. Indeed, this edition is our only example from the manuscript transmission of the *Histories* in which a compiler inserted whole passages into the text that are not derived from Gregory himself. Despite the many differences in the various transmissions of the *Histories*, they all used chapters of the *Histories* themselves as the main building blocks for their rearrangements of a narrative that Gregory had hoped to pass on to later generations intact and unchanged. Various versions of the text – including one compiled at

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146   On the use of the historiographical compendium for the compilation of the *Chronicon Vedastinum*, see *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, (eds.) Grat et al. xlii–xliii; Lotte Kéry, *Die Errichtung des Bistums Arras (1093/1094)*, Beihefte der Francia 33 (Sigmaringen 1994), 335–345; Heinrich Sproemberg, "Die Gründung des Bistums Arras im Jahre 1094," in *Mittelalter und demokratische Geschichtsschreibung*, (ed.) idem (Berlin, 1971), 119–153, here 126 with n. 27, *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, (eds.) Grat et al. xlii–xliii.

147   Kéry, *Errichtung,* 220–221 and 336–341.

148   Krusch, "Grundlagen," 710.

Lorsch at the beginning of the 9th century, another compiled at Saint Hubert around the middle of the ninth century, and a third compiled at Echternach around 900 – were still used as exemplars to produce further copies of the Carolingian *Ten Books of Histories* in the 11th and 12th centuries.[149]

However, we possess no extant copy of a Carolingian edition of Gregory's text from after the 12th century. At the same time, a nearly complete version of Gregory's *Histories* gained increasing popularity from the 10th century onward. These manuscripts have only minor lacunae, which actually resulted from the loss of a page and a quire in an earlier exemplar. Fifteen extant manuscript-witnesses of this version were produced between the 10th and 15th centuries – all of them likely written in the Capetian kingdoms.

It was most likely one of these versions that Fulbert of Chartres consulted to answer his king's question regarding the blood rain from 1027. But we should not read this as a rediscovery of the 'original' *Histories* of Gregory. As we have seen, complete, or at least more complete, versions of the text were available and used throughout the Merovingian and Carolingian periods. Especially in the Carolingian world, we have ample evidence that the extant editions of the *Histories* were not only compiled with the help of more complete versions of the text, but were also kept alongside these versions in different scriptoria. Fulbert's choice – like those of other users and copyists in the high and late Middle Ages – represents the deliberate selection of a version of the text that had become more popular than its earlier Merovingian and Carolingian editions. As the rich story of Gregory's manuscript transmission demonstrates, this new interest in a version of the text much closer to the original *Histories* did not replace the older Merovingian and Carolingian editions. Just as more complete versions of Gregory's text were kept alongside new editions in the early Middle Ages, so Merovingian and Carolingian editions were later kept alongside Capetian editions of the *Histories*. The increasing popularity of the latter undoubtedly reflected a new desire to connect the Capetian kingdoms to the Merovingian and Carolingian past.[150] But it also built upon the prestige of

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149   Parallels with the edition of Lorsch can be found in Brussels, Bibl. Royale 9361–67 from the 12th century (Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'ouvre," 288; Bruno Krusch, "Die handschriftlichen Grundlagen der Historia Francorum Gregors von Tours. Die Handschrift von Namur und ihre Verwandten (C2*, 3, 3*, 4)," *Historische Vierteljahresschrift* 28 [193]: 1–15); with the compilation of Saint Hubert (Paris, BN lat. 5922, 12th century), and with the compilation that was probably begun at Echternach (Paris BN lat. 5921).

150   See for instance, Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose in Thirteenth Century France* (Berkely, 1993); eadem, "The *Reditus regni ad stirpem Karoli magni*," in eadem, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore and London, 1999), 111–137; Matthew Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory: The*

Gregory as a religious and historical authority – an authority that had been continuously enhanced through repeated engagement and experimentation with his historiographical legacy in the early Middle Ages.

Gregory's Works in the High Medieval and Early Modern Periods

John J. Contreni

16.1   Introduction

In the centuries following the Carolingian age, Gregory's works continued to suffer a thousand editorial cuts, betraying the hope he expressed in *Hist.* 10.31 that posterity would honor his works by maintaining them intact.[1] While the process of adaptation and rearrangement of Gregory's texts, especially the *Histories*, make it sometimes difficult to recover his intentions, the rewriting and excerpting that Gregory condemned demonstrate how useful Gregory's words were to writers of the high medieval and early modern ages. Writers across the centuries continued actively and creatively to engage Gregory's works, enlisting them in the service of their own needs.

This is not to say that these centuries had no use for complete texts of individual works. Many of the surviving manuscripts of Gregory's works date from the 11th to the 15th centuries. When Abbot Desiderius of Monte Cassino (ca 1026–1087) put together a collection of histories of the Germanic peoples,

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1   For other perspectives on the fortune of Gregory's works, see above ch. 5 by Bourgain and ch. 15 by Reimitz; elsewhere, Pascale Bourgain, "Gregorius Turonensis ep.," in *La Trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo / Mediaeval Latin Texts and Their Transmission,* Texts and Transmission 1, (eds.) Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi (Florence, 2004), 152–204; and, John J. Contreni, "Gregorius Turonensis," in *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, 9 (ed.) Virginia Brown (Washington, D.C., 2011), 55–71; idem, "Reading Gregory of Tours in the Middle Ages," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, Cultures, Beliefs and Traditions: Medieval and Early Modern Peoples 8, (eds.) Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden, 2002), 419–34.

he had a copy of Gregory's *Histories* made for the monastic library.[2] The late 11th-century Monte Cassino 275, as it would turn out, became the surviving manuscript of the *Histories* that best represents its author's intentions. Bruno Krusch designated it A1 in his stemma, a position it earned obviously not on account of its antiquity, but because the Italian branch of the tradition was immune to all the changes made to the text in the lands of the Franks north of the Alps. Another Italian manuscript, perhaps also from Monte Cassino, the rare 8th-century complete copy of *De cursu stellarum ratio* interested either Otto III (a. 980–1002) or Henry II (a. 1002–1024) who then brought it north to Bamberg where modern scholarship discovered it in 1853.[3] But, despite continued interest in complete copies of Gregory's works, the real story of their fortune in the post-Carolingian centuries is a story of creative revision and adaptation.

16.2   The *Histories*

Authors of local histories or biographies often grounded their accounts in the remote past to give their subjects historical tradition and pedigree. For many, this meant pulling information from Gregory's *Histories*. When Magister Adam of Bremen composed the *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* in 1075/76, he embedded the early history of Hamburg in the history of the Saxons and Saxony. Gregory provided information on the early wars Romans and Franks waged against the Saxons, particularly the time that the Franks captured their islands and drove the Saxons from them (*Hist.* 2.18–19).[4] The cathedral canon who composed the history of the bishops of Cambrai for Bishop Gerard (a. 1012–51) was frustrated that he could not find information on the founder and the date his city was established. He was convinced, however, that the city was renowned from ancient times since its name and fame were

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2 *Chronica monasterii Casinensis* 3.3, (ed.) Hartmut Hoffmann, MGH SS 34 (Hanover, 1980), 444: "Codices namque nonnullos in hoc loco describi precepit, quorum nomina hec sunt... Historiam Langobardorum, Gothorum et Wandalorum, Historiam Iordanis episcopi de Romanis et Gothis, Historiam Gregorii Turonensis..."

3 For these copies of *Hist.* and CS as well as patterns of manuscript survival of Gregory's other works, see Pascale Bourgain and Martin Heinzelmann, "L'Oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours: La diffusion des manuscrits," in*, Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois: Actes du Congrès international, Tours, 3–5 novembre 1994,* (eds.) Nancy Gauthier and Henri Galinié (Tours, 1997), 273–317, especially 277 and 312.

4 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* 1.3, 3rd ed., (ed.) Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SS rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum (Hanover, 1917; rept 1993), 6, line 10.

recorded by the writers of ancient deeds. He called to witness what he knew as the "history of the Franks" ("Francorum historia") which records the vignette of King Chlodio's defeat of the Romans at Cambrai and his brief residence in the town (*Hist*. 2.9). He then immediately fast-forwarded three Frankish kings later to the next milepost in Cambrai's recorded history, the account of the debauched King Ragnachar of Cambrai's fall at the hands of his kinsman, the wily and murderous King Clovis (*Hist*. 2.42). Thus it was with Gregory that the history of Cambrai truly began.[5]

The *Histories* could be mined for purposes less prosaic than establishing historical beginnings. During the papal reform movement of the 11th century, Peter Damian composed a clever dialogue between an "advocate of the king" who argued that Christian princes always choose popes and a "defender of the Roman church" who countered that "lie." As the defender, Peter scoured papal histories to amass a roster of popes who were chosen without secular approval. But, just in case anyone remembered a famous incident in which imperial approval seemingly was required in a papal election, the defender brought the incident up to explain it away. In *Hist.* 10.1 Gregory related the events surrounding the election of his contemporary, the *other* Gregory, to the papal seat in 590, including the story that Gregory the Great (a. 590–604) wrote to Emperor Maurice begging him not to approve his election. The Tours' bishop reported that Gregory's letter was intercepted with the consequence that Maurice happily issued documents sanctioning the pope-elect's appointment. What to do about this clear statement of direct secular involvement in papal elections? Peter attributed the circumstances Gregory of Tours so colorfully reported (and "a very few" other unmentioned instances) to the confusion of the times and the dreadful calamities of wars.[6]

Gregory could also be called on to support the imperial party. In 1090–1093, a monk of Hersfeld wrote against Gregory VII's deposition of Emperor Henry IV, marshaling from the historical record a "cloud of witnesses" in support of his Gelasian view of separate spheres of secular and religious authority. Even the Lord, he pointed out, bore patiently the transgressions of Saul and David, allowing them to continue their reigns. But God did bring down Desiderius of the Lombards in the 8th century for his crimes against the church and the *res*

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5 The author switched to the biography of St Vaast and to Flodoard's excerpts from the life of St Remigius in his *Historia Remensis Ecclesiae* to continue the early history of Cambrai and Arras. See *Gesta pontificum Cameracensium*, 1.3-4, (ed.) Ludwig K. Bethmann, MGH SS 7 (H1846; rept 1968), 403–4.

6 *Petri Damiani Disceptatio synodalis*, (ed.) Lothar von Heinemann, MGH SS Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI et XII conscriptis 1 (Hanover, 1891), 79, lines 5–35.

publica, using, the monk carefully reported, King Charles (a. 768–814) of the Franks as his agent, not the pope. Pope Hadrian II (a. 867–872) confronted Lothair II (a. 855–869), another Carolingian, over his adulteries and other crimes, but, in the end it was God who removed him from office by striking him dead. This is exactly what happened to King Charibert of the Franks who, in Gregory of Tours' telling (*Hist.* 4.26), married two sisters sequentially, ignoring excommunication by the bishop of Paris. But, pointedly, "by the judgement of God he was struck down," but not by the bishop.[7]

There was a second, wider stream of post-Carolingian readings of the *Histories*, interested not so much in specific anecdotes pulled from Gregory's pages to address contemporary issues, but in revising Gregory's great work for new audiences.[8] Already the century and a half between Gregory's death in 594 and the official end of the Merovingian dynasty in mid-8th century, saw various creative and complicated redactions of the *Histories* produced. Generally, these new versions (collected under Bruno Krusch's rubric C) suppressed Gregory's interest in ecclesiastical and local history to focus more clearly on the Franks and to reflect a Carolingian historical slant. Yet another version of the *Histories* emerged in the 10th century, Krusch's D family of manuscripts represented by 15 copies evenly distributed from the 10th through the 15th centuries. Unlike the Carolingian edition, the D version is remarkably full, deliberately omitting only Gregory's general preface with its "Woe are our times" ("Vae diebus nostris," *Hist.* praef.) leitmotiv and part of his concluding observations calculating the age of the earth as of 594 (*Hist.* 10.31). Both would have seemed anachronistic to 'modern' readers. More significantly, the D family titles the work *Liber de gestis Francorum* or some variant. The sponsors of this version, wanted a history of all the Franks, even the long (and safely) gone Merovingians, and shared none of the Carolingian anxiety about elements of early Frankish history. They reflected the interests of the new Capetian monarchy, eager to anchor its dynasty deep into Frankish history.[9]

Later generations of Capetians required a more nuanced version of early Frankish history, one that celebrated kings and downplayed religious, especially episcopal, oversight of monarchs. The 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries witnessed intense interest in the history of France and its monarchs, interest

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7   *Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda*, 2.25, (ed.) Williram Schwenkenbecher, ibid., 225–31
    (p. 229, lines 29–33 for Gregory).

8   For additional specific uses of the *Hist*ories, see the detailed indices and *Nachträge* in each of
    the volumes of Max Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 3 vols
    (Munich, 1911–31), and Contreni, "Gregorius Turonensis," 69–70.

9   Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'Oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours," 279, 283–91.

propelled by historian-monks at Saint-Denis and Saint-Germain-des-Prés and that culminated in the *Grandes Chroniques de France*.[10] Gregory's *Histories* was largely irrelevant to this new enterprise. The number of surviving manuscripts tails off after the 11th century, suggesting, too, that interest in Gregory's history waned generally, except as a fertile source of excerpts and anecdotes.

Aimoin, monk of Fleury (a. 960–1010), did make serious use of Gregory's *Histories* and mediated the bishop of Tours' contribution to high medieval historiography, but in a very tendentious manner. In the dedicatory letter of his *De gestis regum Francorum libri iv*, Aimoin reported to Abbo, his abbot, that he had fulfilled Abbo's request to boil down the history of the Franks, scattered in many crudely written books, into one work in better Latin.[11] His ethnography of the Germans and the situation of Gaul depended on large chunks of Julius Caesar. For the Franks he used principally the first seven books of the *Histories*, (Pseudo-)Fredegar, and the *Liber Historiae Francorum*. The portrait he drew of Clovis is especially revealing.[12] In his pages, Aimoin described Clovis as the first *Christian* king of the Franks and made sure that his readers knew that Frankish kingship predated Clovis' baptism and consecration. While Archbishop Remigius of Reims looms large in Gregory's account, his role in Aimoin's retelling recedes in favor of the king's personal authority. Aimoin's intent was to drive home that Clovis "was a king, and a good king, before becoming Christian."[13] The separation that Aimoin worked between the royal and episcopal authority betrayed Gregory of Tours' notions of how things should be, but made Aimoin's account particularly appealing to the monks of Saint-Denis (Reims' rival in managing the royal brand in the 13th century) when Louis ix commissioned the *Grandes Chroniques de France*. Thus, elements of the *Histories* ended up in mainstream official French royal history, but in a way that Gregory would not recognize.[14]

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10   François Bethune, "Les écoles historiques de Saint-Denis et Saint-Germain-des-Prés dans leurs rapports avec la composition des *Grandes Chroniques de France*," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 4 (1903), 24–38, 207–30.

11   *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* 3, (ed.) Dom Martin Bouquet, new ed. Léopold Delisle (Paris, 1869), 21; PL 39: 627B.

12   Claude Carozzi, "Clovis, de Grégoire de Tours aux Grandes Chroniques de France: Naissance d'une mémoire ambiguë," in *Faire mémoire: Souvenir et commémoration au Moyen Âge*, (eds.) Claude Carozzi and Huguette Taviani-Carozzi (Aix-en-Provence, 1999), 41–61.

13   Ibid., 54.

14   See Robert Levine, *France before Charlemagne: A Translation from the Grandes Chroniques*, Studies in French Civilization, 3 (Lewiston, NY, 1990), 1–9; and *Les Grandes chroniques de France*, (ed.) Jules Viard, 10 vols (Paris, 1920–1953).

The *Histories* was also appreciated for its hagiography. Excerpts of one to four manuscript leaves occur in some 80 manuscripts from the 9th to the 14th centuries. Most carry the stories of individual saints and appear in collections of saints' lives or in collections of sermons for feast days. The life of Bishop Bricius of Tours from *Hist.* 2.1 had a prolific independent existence, appearing in at least 21 manuscripts. Perhaps readers enjoyed following the tumultuous career of Bricius, an arrogant but innocent man falsely accused and ultimately vindicated – in one instance by a talking baby who denied Bricius' paternity. The lives of Sidonius Apollinaris and of the recluse Hospitius of Nice from the Second and Sixth book of the *Histories* (2.22; 6.6) also stand alone. By far, the most frequently excerpted passage from Gregory's grand work is *Hist.* 1.48 which, in its independent existence appears at least 45 times as either the *Epistola* or the *Sermo Gregorii de obitu* (or *transitu*) *sancti Martini episcopi*.[15]

Given Gregory's modern reputation as the historian of the Franks, it is salutary to recall that the Middle Ages remembered him primarily as the historian of saints and wonders. Already in the 9th century, Heiric of Auxerre (a. 841–ca 880) described Gregory only as a "careful investigator and most zealous publisher of miracles" ("miraculorum curiosus indagator ac studiosissimus editor").[16] Rodulfus Glaber (ca 980–ca 1046) referred to Gregory in similar terms as the "holy describer of many saints' miracles" ("beatus multorum sanctorum descriptor miraculorum").[17] Even when Fulbert of Chartres (bishop, a. 1006–1028) drew directly from the *Histories* in response to a query from King Robert (a. 996–1031), he recommended Gregory to the king not on account of his acumen as a historian, but because his "truthfulness is avouched by his holy life and faith" ("propter auctoritatem religionis suae").[18] Gregory's reputation in the post Carolingian centuries continued to center on his works as rich storehouses of wonders and pious *exempla*.[19]

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15   See Contreni, "Gregorius Turonensis," 69–70; and, Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'Oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours," 309–10.

16   *Miracula sancti Germani episcopi Antissiodorensis*, PL 124: 1227A.

17   *Vita domni Willelmi abbatis* viii, in *Rodulfi Glabri Historiarum libri quinque; Eiusdem auctoris Vita domni Willelemi abbatis*, (eds.) John France and Neithard Bulst, and Paul Reynolds (Oxford, 1989), 274.

18   *Epistola 125*, in Frederick Behrends, (ed.) and trans., *The Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres* (Oxford, 1976), 224–25. Translation by Behrends.

19   See for Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris, Sarah Hamilton, "Tales of Wonder in the *Chronica maiora* of Matthew Paris," *Reading Medieval Studies* 26 (2000), 113–40.

16.3   The *Books of Miracles*

"I have written ten books of Histories, seven of Miracles, and one on the Life of the Fathers" ("Decem libros Historiarum, septem Miraculorum, unum de Vita Patrum scripsi," *Hist.* 10.31). In the introduction to his *Glory of the Confessors*, Gregory configured the second and third items in this list in a slightly different way, specifying that he wrote a little book (*libellus*) on the miracles of the Lord, the apostles and martyrs (*GM*), a second on the miracles of Saint Julian of Brioude (*VJ*), then four books of miracles of Saint Martin of Tours (*VM*), a seventh on the life of the *feliciosi*, the blessedly happy (*VP*), and the eighth book in the series, his current project on the miracles of the confessors (*GC*).[20] Manuscript evidence suggests that Gregory's readers came to think of these works as a bloc, as his "eight books of miracles" as enumerated in *GC*. Some two dozen manuscripts of the eight books survive more or less intact, with the highpoint for production in the 12th century (nine surviving copies).[21]

Even more copies survive as independent works. The books on Julian and Martin naturally spun off the collection to chart their own impressive independent courses in the post-Carolingian centuries. *VJ* was copied independently into 12th- and 13th-century legendaries and was the first of Gregory's works translated into French. Guillaume Danicot († 1472/73) produced a vernacular version sometime between 1463 and 1467 for Queen Charlotte of Savoy (a. 1442–1483), the wife of King Louis XI (a. 1423–1483), who was interested in Merovingian saints' lives. Two additional translations followed by 1515, both commissioned by the monks of Saint Julian in Tours whose community offered the work to the king for his spiritual edification, but really to remind him of their community's foundation and its links to Gregory of Tours who at Saint Julian was paired with Gregory the Great *contemporaneus*.[22]

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20   *GC* prol., 298, lines 14–19. For English translations and important introductions to the eight
       books of miracles, see Edward James, *Gregory of Tours: Life of the Fathers* (Liverpool, 1985);
       Raymond Van Dam, *Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Martyrs* (Liverpool, 1988); idem, *Gregory
       of Tours: Glory of the Confessors* (Liverpool, 1988); idem, "Gregory of Tours: The Suffering
       and Miracles of the Martyr St. Julian," and "Gregory of Tours: The Miracles of the Bishop
       St. Martin," in idem, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993),
       162–95, 199–303. And see above, ch. 4.

21   See Bruno Krusch's introduction to the eight books in MGH SRM 1/2: 1–34 and his
       Appendix in MGH SRM 7: 707–56. See also Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'Oeuvre de
       Grégoire de Tours," 294–300, for a useful summary and updates.

22   See Colette Beaune, "Traduire Grégoire à Tours au XVe siècle," in *Grégoire de Tours et
       l'espace gaulois,* (eds.) Gauthier/Galinié, 331–39 (p. 338 for the two Gregorys).

The independent fortune of the four books of miracles of Saint Martin of Tours was explosive. In addition to its presence in complete copies of the eight books of miracles, some 45 manuscripts from the 10th to the 16th centuries underscore continuous interest in Martin right through the period. And that interest, though centered in modern France, was transnational. Copies of *VM* could be found in library cupboards in Spain, Germany, and Italy.[23] The *Martinellus*, a Carolingian anthology on Saint Martin that includes extracts from *the Histories* and *VM*, continued to be popular in the post-Carolingian centuries.[24]

The eight books of miracles could be used just as the *Histories* were, as valuable sources of information on a wide variety of topics. A clever 11th-century reader of *VP* inserted passages from Gregory's paragraphs about St Illidius and St Gall (*VP* 2.1 and 6.2–3) into *De rebus Treverensibus saec. VIII–X libellus* to prove it was not at all unusual ("non mirum vero") that Trier in *prima Belgica* should be linked with Reims in *secunda Belgica*. The lives and deeds of Illidius and Gall showed Trier in contact with the Auvergne. Bishops and saints could and did have transregional careers.[25] But, the predominant pattern of the eight books with their cast of some 235 martyrs, confessors, saints, and Fathers especially was dismemberment. Hundreds of excerpts were entered independently and often anonymously from the 11th to the 14th centuries into a wide variety of manuscripts, especially lectionaries and breviaries. The cameos are often introduced as *pauca verba de*, 'a few words about,' and suggest possible use in sermons. A diverse group of heroes attracted particular attention from readers – Martin, of course, then Christ, Saint Mary, the True Cross and its associated miracles, followed by Bartholomew, Melanius, Vincent, Felix of Nola, Nicetius of Trier, and Venantius among the most frequently selected from the eight books.[26]

In addition to stories of wonders, Gregory helped spread news of Eastern miracles through works he adapted or had translated. He reworked an old Latin version of an apocryphal Greek life of Andrew the apostle that he came across, probably while composing his section on Andrew in *GM* 30. Gregory, who so deprecated his own literary talents, cast himself as a copy editor of the

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23   Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'Oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours," 300.

24   For the complex textual history of the *Martinellus*, see Bourgain and Heinzelmann, 'L'Oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours: La Diffusion des manuscrits, 300–9.

25   *De rebus Treverensibus saec. VIII-X libellus* 7, (ed.) Georg Waitz, MGH SS 14 (Hanover, 1883; rept 1963), 102.

26   See Contreni, "Gregorius Turonensis," 70–1; and, Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'Oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours," 310–12.

Book of Miracles of the Blessed Apostle Andrew (MA) because the text's extreme wordiness ("propter nimiam verbositatem") led some to doubt its authenticity.[27] Gregory's reworking of the old version of Andrew's miracles was hugely successful, on a par with the *Histories* and VM. Most of the 60 manuscripts that survive are post-Carolingian, including the only one that attributes the work to the bishop, a 12th-century Cluny lectionary.[28] Petrus Pictor, a canon of Saint-Omer at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, mined MA 4 for his poem, *De muliere mala*, about a woman who sought incestuous relations with her son and was punished for it.[29] Gregory's version of Andrew's *acta* enjoyed some success in England and even Iceland.[30]

Gregory's rendition of *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus* likewise turned out to be quite popular when translated from Greek to Latin by John, a Syrian Gregory knew. Gregory produced two versions of *Seven Sleepers* – a short account in GM 94 and a longer, freestanding *passio*.[31] *Seven Sleepers*, with its inherently appealing Rip Van Winkle-like account of seven Christians who hid in a cave during the persecution of Decius and awoke some 200 years later during the reign of the Christian emperor, Theodosius II, was widely popular in the Middle Ages thanks to Gregory. The earliest manuscript dates from the ninth century, but it was copied continuously in succeeding centuries.[32] It turns up in in Anglo-Saxon medical charms and an Italian chronicle and in vernacular versions in French, including an Anglo-Norman verse adaptation, and Irish.[33]

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27   *MA* praef., 16, 377. Gregory also shared his birthday with the saint's feastday, November 30, and may have wished to vindicate his special saint.

28   *MA*, app. crit., 41. For the manuscripts, see Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'Oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours," 313–14, and, Bourgain, "Gregorius Turonensis ep.," 167. The attribution to Gregory is secure. See Klaus Zelzer, "Zur Frage des Autors der *Miracula B. Andreae Apostoli* und zur Sprache des Gregor von Tours," *Grazer Beiträge* 6 (1977), 217–41.

29   Marie Therese Wieser, "Zu Petrus Pictors misogynem Carmen 14," *Wiener Studien* 115 (2002), 315–20.

30   For Ordericus Vitalis (1075-ca 1142) and William of Malmesbury (ca 1095/96-ca 1143), see Bourgain and Heinzelmann, "L'Oeuvre de Grégoire de Tours," 314, and, Bourgain, "Gregorius Turonensis ep.," 167; also Lenore Harty, "An Edition of a Fourteenth-Century Version of *Andreas saga postola* and Its Sources," *Mediaeval Studies* 29 (1977), 121–59.

31   *Passio septem dormientum apud Ephesum translata in Latinum per Georgium Florentium Gregorium Turonicum* (*editio nova*), (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 7: 757–69.

32   For seven copies additional to the ten Krusch used, ibid., 757–58, see Contreni, "Gregorius Turonensis," 61, note 35.

33   W. Bonser, "The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in Anglo-Saxon and Later Recipes," *Folk-Lore: A Quarterly Review of Myth, Tradition, Institution, and Custom* 56 (1945), 254–55; for an echo in the 11th-century *Chronica di Novalesa*, see P.J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), 131; Brian S.

Jacobus de Voragine (ca 1230–1298) adapted the story for his influential *Legenda aurea.* De Voragine did not attribute his version of *Seven Sleepers* to Gregory, but he did credit the bishop as his source for four of the 177 legends in his collection: Felix of Nola (*GM* 104); Saint Paul (*GM* 28); Symphorianus (*GM* 51); and, from *Hist.* 2.1, Bricius.[34] Approximately one thousand Latin and vernacular manuscripts of the *Golden Legend* survive, some 70 for the 13th century alone. They were used in churches for sermon material as well as in schools and universities.[35] Through de Voragine's collection, fragments of Gregory's work reached an enormously wide audience and assumed a permanent place in the stock of medieval legend literature.

Medieval collections of *exempla* offered another avenue for Gregory's works to reach a wider, even a popular audience.[36] Collections of *exempla* supplied preachers, especially Franciscan and Dominican friars, with material they could weave into their sermons. The more graphic the anecdotes the better since the point was to influence behavior with examples of rewards for good behavior, punishments for bad behavior, and the ever-present reality of saints and demons in human affairs. In the post-Carolingian centuries collections of exempla grew larger and larger and more systematic as earlier collections were rolled up into new collections.[37] As the genre matured, it is unlikely that compilers of exempla such as Clemente Sánchez, archdeacon of Valderas in Spain in the early 15th century, actually searched through Gregory's works to compose an account of a thief condemned to hang who was rescued by Saint Mary (Gregory reported this miracle three times, but attributed it to Saints Martin

Merrilees, "La *Passio Septem Dormientium* en français," *Romania* 93 (1972), 547–63; Chardri, *La vie des Set Dormanz*, (ed.) Brian Merrilees, Anglo-Norman Text Society 35 (London, 1977); Robert Atkinson, *The Passions and the Homilies from the Leabhar Breac: Text, Translation, and Glossary*, Royal Irish Academy, Todd Lectures Series 2 (Dublin, 1887), 68–71, 309–13.

34   *Jacobi a Voragine, Legenda Aurea vulgo Historia Lombardica dicta. Ad optimorum librorum fidem*, cap. 101, 19, 90, 122, 167, (ed.) Th. Graesse, 3rd. ed. (Wratislav, 1890), 435–38, 102–3, 380–96, 539–40, 751–52, respectively.

35   Relatively few 6th-century authors made it into the collection. See Barbara Fleith, "The Patristic Sources of the *Legenda Aurea:* A Research Report," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West from the Carolingians to the Maurists*, (ed.) Irena Backus, 2 vols (Leiden, 1997), 1: 231–87.

36   For an overview, see Wolfgang Maaz, "Gregor von Tours," *Enzyklopädie des Märchens: Handwörterbuch zur historischen und vergleichenden Erzählforschung,* 6 (Berlin and New York, 1990), 117–25.

37   Many collections remain in manuscript. See J.-Th. Welter, *L'Exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Age* (Paris and Toulouse, 1927), 89, 91, 97, 219, 299, 328, 357, 382, 390, 401.

and Eparchius: *VM* 1.21, 3.53; *GC* 99) or a tale of a farmer who was punished with paralysis when he hitched up his oxen and began to plow his fields (*VJ* 11). Both motifs were well developed by Sánchez's day and the most that can be said is that Gregory contributed to their development.[38]

What is surprising about Gregory's influence in the *exempla* collections is how modest it really is, given the hundreds of useful examples he compiled not only in the eight books of miracles, but in the *Histories* as well. In the *Tabula exemplorum*, a very popular French collection of the second half of the 13th century and continuously copied in the 14th and 15th centuries, Gregory's works contributed material for only one story a preacher might use. A friar looking for something to tell his congregation about the devil could turn to the *Tabula exemplorum* section titled *Dyabolus* to locate a story about how the devil inspired a Jew to pull down an image of Christ by sticking it with his knife, in effect crucifying Christ a second time. This popular story, told in *GM* 21 and subsequently embellished to become a staple of Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric, is the only Gregorian contribution to the collection.[39] A late 13th-century English collection, also continuously copied in the 14th and 15th centuries, likewise contained but one borrowing from Gregory's works – the story of how a prayer to the martyr Laurentius caused a roof beam cut too short to span the width of a church dedicated to him to grow even beyond the needed length. This tale from *GM* 41, copied under the rubric *De ecclesia*, might impress listeners with the power of prayer and of Laurentius as well as enhance churches as sites of wondrous events.[40]

The proliferation of *exempla* collections culminated in 1481 with the publication of what came to be known as the *Magnum speculum exemplorum*. Compiled by someone known only as *Collector*, the work went through

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[38]   Alexandre Haggerty Krappe, "Les sources du *Libro de exemplos*," *Bulletin Hispanique* 39 (1937), nos. 48 and 164 (pp. 19, 27). Sánchez's account of a monk who avoided women, no. 311 (p. 38), more closely mirrors Gregory's cameo of Simeon Stylites (*GC* 26).

[39]   J.-Th. Welter, *La Tabula exemplorum secundum ordinem alphabeti: Recueil d'exempla compilé en France à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris and Toulouse, 1926), no. 57 (pp. 19, 101). Another 13th-century version from southern France places the scene in the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and has the Jew converted to Christianity at the end (he was crushed beneath stones in *GM* 21): see idem, "Un nouveau recueil franciscain d'*exempla* de la fin du XIIIe siècle," *Etudes franciscaines* 42 (1930), 595–6.

[40]   Idem, *Le Speculum laicorum: Edition d'une collection d'exempla composé en Angleterre à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1914), 46. This collection, unusually, credits the account to Gregory: "213. Refert Greg. turonensis: De s. Laurencio sacerdoti cuidam ecclesiam edificante trabem longiorem concedente."

39 print editions down to 1747. Its 1266 examples are divided into ten *distinctiones*, the ninth of which pulls together 218 "exempla ex diversorum auctorum scriptis collecta." The various authors represented in *distinctio* IX are pagan and Christian writers who lived in antiquity or the Middle Ages. Here is where the *Magnum speculum exemplorum* included *exempla* from Gregory of Tours. GC 31, the story of a married couple who remained chaste during life, but whose sarcophagi afterwards miraculously moved from opposite sides of the church to rest next to each other, was one of several *exempla* to illustrate chastity (*castitas*). *Exemplum* 130 from *Hist.* 2.24, an example of "mercy toward the poor and infirm" ("Misericordia in pauperes & infirmos"), told how Senator Ecdicius saved more than 4000 people in Burgundy from starvation and, in turn, earned a divine promise that his family would never lack sustenance.[41]

Collections of *exempla* contain many more selections from Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* and from Eusebius and Palladius, often with special subheadings for each author. Remoteness from the late medieval present cannot account for why Gregory is so poorly represented in a literary genre for which his works were so well suited. Perhaps at a critical early stage when *exempla* were first compiled, Gregory's works were simply overlooked and escaped systematic winnowing, an oversight that was never remedied as later generations of compilers struggled to keep up with a growing body of more recent potential sources.

16.4 On the Course of the Stars

This very interesting work usually receives short shrift in Gregory scholarship despite its contribution toward understanding 6th-century ideas about astronomy and the natural world. The reception of CS also sheds interesting light on how Gregory's readers read his work.[42] Gregory registered CS in

41 *Magnum Speculum Exemplorum ex plusquam sexaginta autoribus pietate, doctrina et antiquitate venerandis, variisque historiciis, tractatibus & libellis excerptum, ab Anonymno quodam, qui circiter annum Domini 1480. vixisse deprehenditur* (Douai, 1603), *exempla* IX 20 and 130 (pp. 594–5 and 646). Rainer Alsheimer, *Das Magnum Speculum Exemplorum als Ausgangspunkt populärer Erzähltraditionen: Studien zu seiner Wirkungsgeschichte in Polen und Rußland* (Bern, 1971), 171, reported that a 17th-century Russian translation of the collection included Gregory's account of the women who hoarded money (GM 105).

42 See Contreni, "Gregorius Turonensis," 60–1, and the perceptive pages of Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. Christopher

Hist. 10.31 as "De cursibus ecclesiasticis liber," which might be rendered as "On the Schedule of Ecclesiastical Hours." This meaning seems to be the intent of the expanded title in the Beneventan manuscript the Holy Roman emperor brought to his German lands in the 11th century.[43] But, these titles do not fully capture the contents of the work. Before he provided clerics with directions and images to teach them how to read the night sky to properly observe the night office, the first 16 of the treatise's 47 paragraphs in Krusch's edition introduce another topic altogether. In these paragraphs Gregory described seven *human* wonders – such as Noah's Ark, the Colossus at Rhodes – followed by descriptions of seven *divine*, everlasting wonders – such as tides, Mt. Etna, the germination of seeds, and the rising and falling of stars. In effect, *cs* potentially consists of two works, a roster of human and divine *miracula* and a section on astronomy with images and descriptions of key stars for each month from September through August. Certainly in Gregory's mind the work was unified. The last divine wonder he described, the phases of the moon and the travels of the stars in the heavens, he comfortably elided into what came next: "I would like to explain the travels of the stars, if God allows it and as much as my experience permits, to those who know nothing of them."[44] But the sections could stand independently if anyone were interested only in the wonders or only in the guide for keeping the night hours. This is precisely what happened to *cs*. Only two copies, the Bamberg manuscript and a 12th-century book, also Italian (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. Lat. 67), kept the entire 47-paragraph *cs* intact. Early on in the manuscript tradition (and *cs* can claim two witnesses from the 7th/8th and late-8th centuries), three copies kept only the section on wonders, while one recorded the astronomy section. This pattern, a preference for wonders over astronomy, held in the post-Carolingian centuries. Three copies of the 12th and 13th centuries copied the wonders, while only a 15th-century manuscript retained the astronomy portion. Once again, it was the *miracula* that attracted Gregory's medieval readers.

Carroll (Cambridge, 2001), 158–9. Barbara Obrist, "Les Manuscrits du *De cursu stellarum* de Grégoire de Tours et le manuscrit, Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale 422," *Scriptorium* 56 (2002), 335–45, is fundamental.

43   *cs*, 407, lines 35–36: "In Christi nomine incipit De cursum stellarum ratio, qualiter ad officium implendum debeat observari." See above, p. 567 for the Bamberg manuscript.

44   *cs* 16, 413, lines 8–10: "De quo cursu, si Deus iubeat, velim, de quanto experimentum accipi, rationem nescientibus dare."

16.5   Other Texts. The Advent of Print

As a highly literate and engaged bishop, Gregory surely corresponded with many contemporaries, but apart from the letters from Fortunatus, no letter from or to him survives.[45] He mentioned in *Hist*. 2.22 that he recorded an anecdote about Sidonius Apollinaris in the preface he joined to a book of Sidonius' Masses, but this work apparently has been lost. Only tantalizing fragments of another work recorded on the roster of *Hist*. 10.31, a treatise on the Psalms, survive. Two manuscripts, one Carolingian and one from the 13th century, preserve what must have been the preface to the work with a title that specifies its intent: "Incipit explanatio Florentii Georgii Gregorii De titulis psalmorum."[46] Jean Mabillon (a. 1632–1707), apparently the last person known to see the complete text of *PT*, discovered it in a manuscript of Saint-Martin in Tournai. He sent two excerpts to his confrère, Thierry Ruinart (a. 1657–1709), who published them in his edition of Gregory's works. One can only imagine how much our view of Gregory would be enriched had something more than the morsels Ruinart published ("On remorse"; "On the rewards of the just") survived from his commentary.[47] Mabillon (or Ruinart) described the Tournai fragments as coming from a "very old collection on the virtues and vices" ("ex vetustissima collectione de virtutibus et vitiis"), which may suggest a Carolingian source.

Gregory first appeared in print not on his own terms but in a collection of texts on Martin of Tours. The anthology Hieronymus van Clichtove (†1555) published in 1511 gathered medieval appreciations of Martin in which Gregory's

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45   Hieronymus van Clichtove in his 1511 *editio princeps* of some of Gregory's books of miracles included an "eiusdem epistola ad beatum Sulpitium Bituricensem archiepiscopu[m] in vitam sanctorum septem dormientium," which Ruinart subsequently printed in his *opera omnia* edition of Gregory's works (below note 51), cols. 1269–72 (PL 71: 1105–07). Ruinart reported that the letter did not appear in the manucript from which he edited the "Vita vel conversatio, sive & mors sanctorum septem Dormientium, quorum corpora in Majori-monasterio continentur" (cols. 1271–82; PL 71: 1107-18A). The letter from "Gregorius Turonorum indignus sacerdos" to Archbishop Sulpicius of Bourges (I, †591?) relates the translation of the relics of the Seven Sleepers to Maius Monasterium (Marmoutiers) in Tours. Ruinart did not seem to know the translation of the Seven Sleepers that Gregory mentioned at the end of his brief account in *GM* 94 (col. 828C; PL 71: 789D). For correspondence with Venantius, see Roberts, above, ch. 2.

46   *PT*, 424. See also the important comments of Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 157–8, and Pierre Salmon, *Les Tituli psalmorum des manuscrits latins* (Paris, 1959), 135–48, for the *tituli*.

47   See *PT,* 427, lines 23–32 (PL, 71: 1097B-C).

vm, *gm*, and *vj* were printed along with works of Sulpicius Severus, Odo of Cluny, and Fortunatus.[48] The *editio princeps* of the *Histories* appeared the next year, 1512, from the presses of Josse Badius (Jodocus Badius Ascensius) (a. 1462–1535), bundled with *vp*, *gc*, and Ado of Vienne's (†874) *De sex mundi aetatibus*.[49] The *Histories* and the eight books of miracles have been in print ever since.[50]

The most important moment in the early history of Gregory's editions came in 1699 when Thierry Ruinart published the bishop's *Opera omnia* in an edition graced by a thorough and perceptive discussion of the texts and manuscripts of his author.[51] Ruinart was inspired in part by the claims of Charles Le Cointe (a. 1611–1681) who argued in his *Annales ecclesiastici Francorum* (Paris, 1666) that much of the *Histories* consisted of unwarranted interpolations. Ruinart prepared for his edition by extensive manuscript research that enabled him to vindicate the texts of many of Gregory's works by bringing to bear manuscripts unknown to Le Cointe. In the process of analyzing previous editions, examining manuscripts, and appending his own philological and historical comments to his editions, Ruinart became the father of modern Gregory studies. Ruinart, for example, was the first to note that the six-book version of the *Histories* was not Gregory's preliminary to the full ten-book text, but a later revision. Three centuries after he published *Gregorius noster*, scholars continue to admire Ruinart's achievement.[52]

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48   *Sulpitij Severi de vita divi Martini turone archip[re]sulis liber prim[us]...* (Paris, 1511).

49   *B. Gregorii Turonensis episcopi Historiarum praecipue gallicarum libri* x; *In vitas patrum fere sui temporis lib. 1; De gloria confessorum praecipue gallorum lib. 1; Adonis Viennensis episcopi Sex aetatum mundi breves seu commentarii, usuqe ad Carolum Simplicem Francorum regem* (Paris, 1512). (December 12, 2012, marked the 500th anniversary of the *Histories* in print.)

50   See Contreni, *Gregorius Turonensis*, 67–9, for the early print history of Gregory's works.

51   *Sancti Georgii Florentii Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Opera omnia, necnon Fredegarii scholastici epitome et chronicum, cum suis continuatoribus et aliis antiquis monumentis. Ad codices manuscriptos & veteres editiones collata, emendata, & aucta, atque notis & observationibus illustrata* (Paris, 1699). Ruinart was a monk of the Congregation of Saint-Maur in Paris, the epicenter in the 16th and 17th centuries for publication of numerous learned editions of patristic and medieval texts; see Daniel-Odon Hurel, "The Benedictines of the Congregation of St.-Maur and the Church Fathers," trans. A. Bevan, in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West* (see above n. 35), 2: 1009–38 (p. 1033 for Ruinart). Ruinart's edition occupies vol. 71 in Migne's PL (1849).

52   For *Gregorius noster*, see Ruinart's *Epistola nuncupatoria*, ibid., a ii (PL 71: 9). See also Walter Goffart, "From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum* and Back Again: Aspects of the Textual History of Gregory of Tours," in (eds.) Thomas F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni, *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1987), 59–60, and Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 198.

The age of print finally brought with it as close to a guarantee that Gregory would ever have of his injunction in *Hist.* 10.31. Although excerpts of his works would still be made for audiences as widely divergent as followers of the *Devotio moderna*, readers of 19th-century novels, and 21st-century scholars and students of Merovingian politics, print editions of the early modern age finally fixed intact Gregory's texts.[53]

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53   Nikolaus Staubach, *"Memores pristinae perfectionis:* The Importance of the Church Fathers for *Devotio Moderna,"* in *Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, 1:430–31; Anna Slerca, "L'*Historia Francorum* de Grégoire de Tours, source des *Promessi sposi* de Alessandro Manzoni," *Romania* 118 (2000), 499–518; Alexander Callander Murray, (ed.) and trans., *Gregory of Tours: The Merovingians* (Toronto, 2006).

Maps

The following maps have been compiled over some time from information from many sources, some of them forgotten. However, the results have been checked against the major authorities, especially in the case of Gaul, Auguste Longnon, *La géographie de la Gaule au VIe siècle* (Paris, 1878); Louis Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaul*, 3 vols (Paris 1894–1915); Eugen Ewig, "Die fränkische Teilungen und Teilreiche (511–613)", in idem, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien, Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Hartmut Atsma, Beihefte der Francia 2/1, 1: 114–71; and the *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule, des origines au milieu du VIIIe siècle* (15 vols have been available to me as of this writing). Other sources are noted at Map 1.

Recent attempts to represent the divisions of the 6th century (Map 3) can be found in Edward James, *The Franks* (Oxford, 1988); Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms* (London, 1994) and Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* (Cambridge, 2001; German ed. 1994).

Despite the available resources, many details, both geographical and political, remain obscure. See Map 1 for reservations about the accuracy of the diocesan map that underlies the representations of Gaul.

Shorelines for the Zuyder Zee follow roughly their configuration in the modern period, not those of ancient times or the present day.
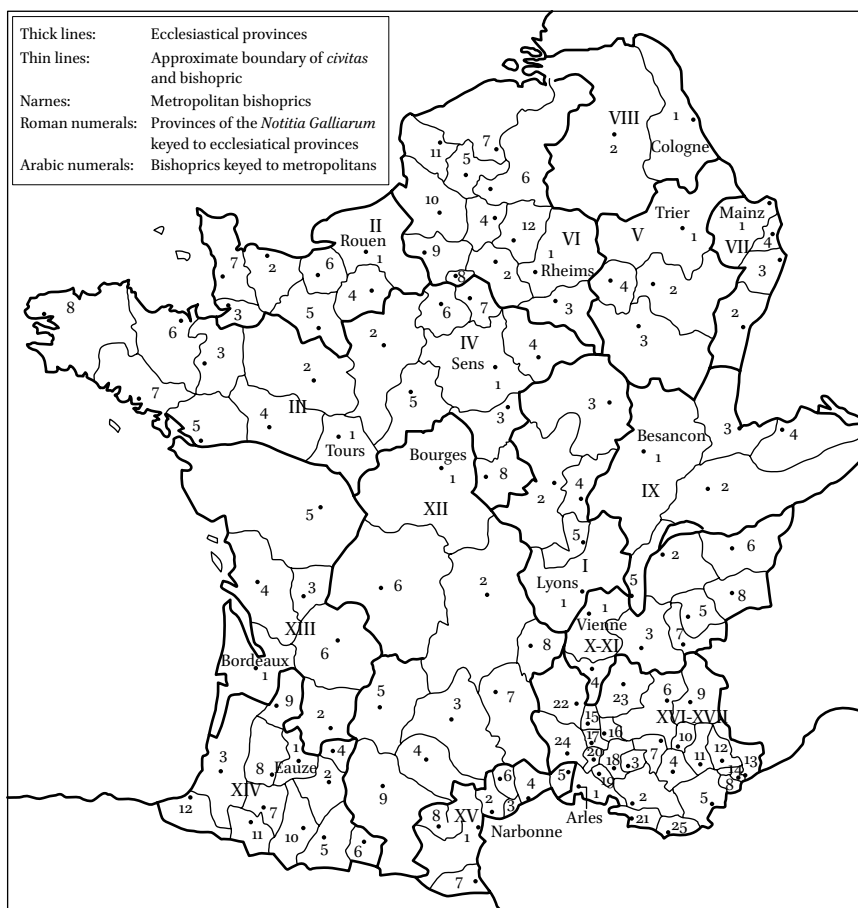
MAP 1   *Merovingian Period Bishoprics and the* Notitia Galliarum

This map, and the list that accompanies it, highlight the *Notitia Galliarum*, a late imperial listing of *civitates* and other important administrative sites, dating in its original version to about 400. Despite the originally secular character of this source, the principal aim of the present list is to record the bishoprics of the Merovingian period (6th and 7th centuries). It draws inspiration from an earlier version by Edward James, *The Origins of France: From Clovis to the Capetians* (London, 1982), pp. xiii–xvii, xix–xx, and a long line of French geographical summaries. It cannot strictly be relied on as a reference tool.

On the map, the boundaries of the dioceses, and in some regions, the provinces, must be understood as approximations based on retrospective, imperfect reconstructions. For the diocesan problem, see Jacques Dubois, "La carte des diocèses de France avant la Révolution", *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 4 (1965), 680–691. Happily, the scale required by a book-page map,

will probably not lead anyone astray by too much. The certainty created by the requirements of a list keyed to a map, however, adds its own problems. And so a word needs to be said about the period represented by this map. The map's purpose is pedagogical not scholarly. It cannot be claimed to represent exactly the situation during Gregory's episcopate, the early 5th century, or even the early 7th century (though that comes closest to its reality). It is, and indeed has to be in some way, achronic. It represents the bishops in their relationship to their metropolitans at various times in the 6th and 7th-centuries when their profiles become clear (not every passing reference to a bishopric in the 5th and 6th centuries has been included). Such a composite picture is in a few cases a potential distortion (the status of Besançon as a metropolitan in the late 6th is a case in point – Besançon does not appear to be a metropolitan under Guntram), but any single, partial and transitory, snapshot (if we were sure how such a picture would look) would fail to capture the main lines of diocesan development from Roman to Merovingian Gaul, which indeed is the purpose of the map.

In the list, Column One gives a register of the bishoprics, under the name of their metropolitan bishopric, which is in caps. This has been keyed in the second column to the *Notitia Galliarum*. This imperial-period catalogue was kept up in the Middle Ages as a record of bishoprics; see above, Esders, ch. 12, n. 78, for the two late 6th-early 7th- century manuscripts with the earliest versions. These, plus the editions by Otto Seeck, *Notitia Dignitatum* (Berlin, 1876), pp. 261–274, and Theodore Mommsen, MGH AA 9/1(1982), 552–612, have been consulted for the present compilation.

The two columns are often in harmony, but not always. Comparing the two is a way to see the changes (or in most regions, the conservative continuity) in ecclesiastical and civil administration in the years from imperial to Merovingian hegemony. The consequences of late Roman ecclesiastical politics are particularly noticeable in the south east. One should also note that *Septimania* (mainly *Narbonensis prima*) was subject to the Visigoths in the time of Gregory's *Histories*. Likewise, much of Brittany was hardly under the control of Frankish kings. Here the map represents the imperial period; but the western portion should be regarded as blank as far as the Merovingians are concerned. Moreover, there is no attempt made in the map, or list, to deal with trans-Rhenan regions.

Column One uses the following conventions:

· Metropolitan bishoprics of the Merovingian period are in caps, spelled in their modern form.
· Their suffragan bishops come next, numbered, following in general (but not always strictly) the order of the *Notitia Galliarum*.
· A slash indicates the movement of a bishopric from one site to another.

Column Two, which is really a version of the *Notitia Galliarum*, is much more complicated:

- Caps are used to mark the divisions of the *Notitia Galliarum*. The major late Roman divisions (between the Gauls and the Seven Provinces) are noted in bold-face caps.
- Individual provinces are marked in caps, prefaced with a Roman numeral. The *Notitia Galliarum* noted the number of provinces as 17 and these numbers, in Roman numerals, are used on the map. Readers will notice these numerals generally correspond to Merovingian ecclesiastical provinces under metropolitans. But sometimes they do not, especially in the south east, where a great deal of reorganization is in evidence. Where the *civitates* of two Roman provinces have been integrated into one ecclesiastical province, I give the two numbers of the *Notitia* together on the map. (The more or less stable number of Merovingian provinces settled in at 15).
- Thus *civitates* are given according to their placement in the *Notitia* but only receive a number in Column One under their metropolitan of the Merovingian period. In the exceptional case of Brittany, I give two *civitates* (Osismes and Corseul) as attested in the *Notitia* and 5th-century sources. The silence of Merovingian sources on the region can have several meanings, but in any case a new paradigm emerged under the Carolingians.
- Some *civitates*, because of reorganization, are listed twice: once in their original spot in the *Notitia* but also in their place among Merovingian bishoprics, where they receive a number in Column One; the original position of these numbered bishoprics is noted in square brackets.
- *Civitates* mentioned in the *Notitia* that do not correspond to a Merovingian-period bishopric are given in small caps in Column Two, but without a number in Column One. Generally it can be assumed they were integrated into a neighbouring ecclesiastical diocese.
- *Castra* in the *Notitia* that did not become bishoprics have been omitted.
- Italics indicate an addition to the early form of the *Notitia*. Italics *and* square brackets across the two columns indicate that the names do not appear at all in the *Notitia*; XI 9, 10, e.g., are post Gregorian, though XVI 23 is not.

A. THE GALLIC PROVINCES

I. LUGDUNENSIS PRIMA

1. LYONS	Metropolis civitas Lugdunensium
2. Autun	Civitas Aeduorum or Augustedunum
3. Langres	Civitas Lingonum

4. Chalon (–sur-Sâone)	Castrum Cabillonense
5. Mâcon	Castrum Matisconense

II. LUGDUNENSIS SECUNDA

1. ROUEN	Metropolis civitas Rotomagensium
2. Bayeux	Civitas Baiocassium
3. Avranches	Civitas Abrincatum
4. Evreux	Civitas Ebroicorum (Atuaticorum)
5. Sées	Civitas Saiorum
6. Lisieux	Civitas Lexoviorum
7. Coutances	Civitas Constantia

III. LUGDUNENSIS TERTIA

1. TOURS	Metropolis Turonorum
2. Le Mans	Civitas Cenomannorum
3. Rennes	Civitas Redonum
4. Angers	Civitas Andecavorum
5. Nantes	Civitas Namnetum
6. Corseul/Alet?	Civitas Coriosolitum
7. Vannes	Civitas Venetum
8. Osismes/Carhaix/	Civitas Ossismorum
Quimper/St-Pol-de-Léon?	
	Civitas Diablintum (Jublains)

IV. LUGDUNENSIS SENONIA (QUARTA)

1. SENS	Metropolis civitas Senonum
2. Chartres	Civitas Carnotum
[*2a. Châteaudun*	*castrum Dunense* (*Hist. 7.17*)]
3. Auxerre	Civitas Autisiodorum
4. Troyes	Civitas Tricassium
5. Orléans	Civitas Aurelianorum
6. Paris	Civitas Parisiorum
7. Meaux	Civitas Melduorum
8. Nevers	*Civitas Nivernensium*

V. BELGICA PRIMA

1. TRIER	Metropolis civitas Treverorum
2. Metz	Civitas Mediomatricum, Mettis
3. Toul	Civitas Leucorum, Tullo
4. Verdun	Civitas Verodunensium

VI. BELGICA SECUNDA

1. RHEIMS	Metropolis civitas Remorum
2. Soissons	Civitas Suessionum
3. Châlons (–en-Champagne)	Civitas Catalaunorum
4. Vermand/Noyon	Civitas Veromandorum/Noviomagus
5. Arras/Cambrai	Civitas Atrabatum
6. Cambrai	Civitas Camaracensium
7. Tournai	Civitas Turnacensium
8. Senlis	Civitas Silvanectum
9. Beauvais	Civitas Bellovacorum
10. Amiens	Civitas Ambianensium
11. Thérouanne	Civitas Morinum
	CIVITAS BONONIENSIUM (Boulogne)
12. Laon	*Civitas Lugduni Clavati* (cf. *Hist.* 6.4)

VII. GERMANIA PRIMA

1. MAINZ	Metropolis civitas Magontiacensium
2. Strasbourg	Civitas Argentoratensium (Strateburgo)
3. Speyer	Civitas Nemetum (Spira)
4. Worms	Civitas Vangionum (Warmatia)

VIII. GERMANIA SECUNDA

| 1. COLOGNE | Metropolis civitas Agrippinensium, Colonia |
| 2. Tongres/Maastricht/Liège | Civitas Tungrorum |

IX. MAXIMA SEQUANORUM

1. BESANÇON	Metropolis civitas Vesontiensium
	CIVITAS EQUESTRIUM, NOIODUNUS (Nyon)
2. Avenches/Lausanne	Civitas Helvitiorum, Aventicus
3. Basel	Civitas Basiliensium
4. Windisch/Constance	Castrum Vindonissense
5. Belley	Castrum Argentariense (Civitas Belicensium)

X. ALPES GRAIARUM ET POENNINARUM
Metropolis civitas Ceutrionum (see under XI 7 VIENNE)
Civitas Valensium (see under XI 8 VIENNE)

B. THE SEVEN PROVINCES

	(X)-XI. VIENNENSIS [AND ALPES GRAIARUM]
1. VIENNE	Metropolis civitas Viennensium
2. Geneva	Civitas Genavensium
3. Grenoble	Civitas Gratianopolitana
	Civitas Albensium (Vivarium) (see under XVI–XVII 22 ARLES)
	Civitas Deensium (see under XVI–XVII 23 ARLES)
4. Valence	Civitas Valentinorum
	Civitas Tricastinorum (see under XVI–XVII 15 ARLES)
	Civitas Vasiensium (see under XVI–XVII 16 ARLES)
	Civitas Arausicorum (see under XVI–XVII 17 ARLES)
	Civitas Carpentoratensium (see under XVI–XVII 18 ARLES)
	Civitas Cabellicorum (see under XVI–XVII 19 ARLES)
	Civitas Avennicorum (see under XVI–XVII 20 ARLES)
	Civitas Arelatensium (see under XVI–XVII 1 ARLES)
	Civitas Massiliensium (see under XVI–XVII 21 ARLES)
5. Tarentaise	Metropolos civitas Ceutronium, Tarantasia [Alpes Graiae et Poenninae]
6. Martigny (Valais)/Sion	Civitas Valensium, Octodurum [Alpes Graiarum et Poenninarum]
[*7. St-Jean-de-Maurienne*	*Civitas Mauriennensis*]
[*8. Aosta*	*Civitas Augusta*]
	XII. AQUITANICA PRIMA
1. BOURGES	Metropolis civitas Biturgium
2. Clermont (–Ferrand)	Civitas Arvernorum
3. Rodez	Civitas Rutenorum
[*3b. Alais (Alès)*	*Vicus Arisitensium* (*Hist.* 5.5)]
4. Albi	Civitas Albigensium
5. Cahors	Civitas Cadurcorum
6. Limoges	Civitas Lemovicum
7. Javols/Mende	Civitas Gabalum
8. Velay/Le Puy?	Civitas Vellavorum
9. Toulouse	Civitas Tolosatium [Narbonensis prima]

XIII. AQUITANICA SECUNDA

1. Bordeaux	Metropolis civitas Burdigalensium
2. Agen	Civitas Aginnensium
3. Angoulême	Civitas Ecolisnensium
4. Saintes	Civitas Santonum
5. Poitiers	Civitas Pictavorum
6. Périgueux	Civitas Petrocoriorum

XIV. NOVEMPOPULANA

1. EAUZE	Metropolis civitas Elusatium
2. Auch	Civitas Ausciorum
3. Dax	Civitas Aquensium
4. Lectoure	Civitas Lactoratium
5. St-Bertrand-de-Comminges	Civitas Convenarum
6. Couserans (Saint-Liziers)	Civitas Consorannorum
	CIVITAS BOATIUM
7. Lescar (Béarn)	Civitas Bernarnensium
8. Aire-sur-Adour	Civitas Aturensium
9. Bazas	Civitas Vasatica
10. Tarbes	Civitas Turba ubi castrum Bogorra (Bigorra)
11. Oloron	Civitas Elloronensium
12. Bayonne	*Civitas Lapurdo* (*Hist.* 9.20)

XV. NARBONENSIS PRIMA

1. NARBONNE	Metropolis civitas Narbonensium
	Civitas Tolosatium (Toulouse, see under XII
	9 BOURGES)
2. Béziers	Civitas Beterrensium
3. *Agde*	*Civitas Agatensium*
4. *Maguelonne*	*Civitas Magalonensium*
5. Nîmes	Civitas Nemausensium
6. Lodève	Civitas Lutevensium
	Castrum Ucetiense (see under XVI 22 ARLES)
7. *Elne*	*Civitas Elnensium*
8. *Carcassonne*	*Civitas Carcassonensium*
	XVI NARBONENSIS SECUNDA (WITH XVII AND
	PARTS OF VIENNENSIS)
1. ARLES	Civitas Arelatensium [Viennensis]
2. Aix-en-Provence	Metropolis civitas Aquensium

3. Apt	Civitas Aptensium
4. Riez	Civitas Regensium
5. Fréjus	Civitas Foroiuliensium
6. Gap	Civitas Vappincensium
7. Sisteron	Civitas Segestericorum
8. Antibes	Civitas Antipolitana
9. Embrun	Metropolis Civitas Ebrodunensium [Alpes Maritimarum]
10. Digne	Civitas Diniensium [Alpes Maritimarum]
11. Senez	Civitas Sanitiensium [Alpes Maritimarum]
12. Glandève	Civitas Glannatena [Alpes Maritimarum]
13. Cimiez/Nice	Civitas Cemelensium [Alpes Maritimarum]
14. Vence	Civitas Vintiensium [Alpes Maritimarum]
15. St-Paul-Trois-Châteaux	Civitas Tricastinorum [Viennensis]
16. Vaison	Civitas Vasiensium [Viennensis]
17. Orange	Civitas Arausicorum [Viennensis]
18. Carpentras	*Civitas Carpentoratensium* [Viennensis]
19. Cavaillon	Civitas Cabellicorum [Viennensis]
20. Avignon	Civitas Avennicorum [Viennensis]
21. Marseilles	Civitas Massiliensium [Viennensis]
22. Alba/Viviers	Civitas Albensium (Vivarium)
23. Die	Civitas Deensium
24. Uzès	Castrum Uceciense (Civitas Ucetecensium, Eucetica) [Narbonensis prima]
25. Toulon	*Civitas Telonensium*

XVII ALPES MARITIMARUM

Metropolis Civitas Ebrodunensium (see under XVI 9 ARLES)

Civitas Diniensium (see under XVI 10 ARLES)

Civitas Rigomagensium

Civitas Salinensium (Castellane)

Civitas Sanitiensium (see under XVI 11 ARLES)

Civitas Glannatena (see under XVI 12 ARLES)

Civitas Cemelensium (see under XVI 13 ARLES)

Civitas Vintiensium (see under XVI 14 ARLES)

There are 17 provinces with 115 *civitates*
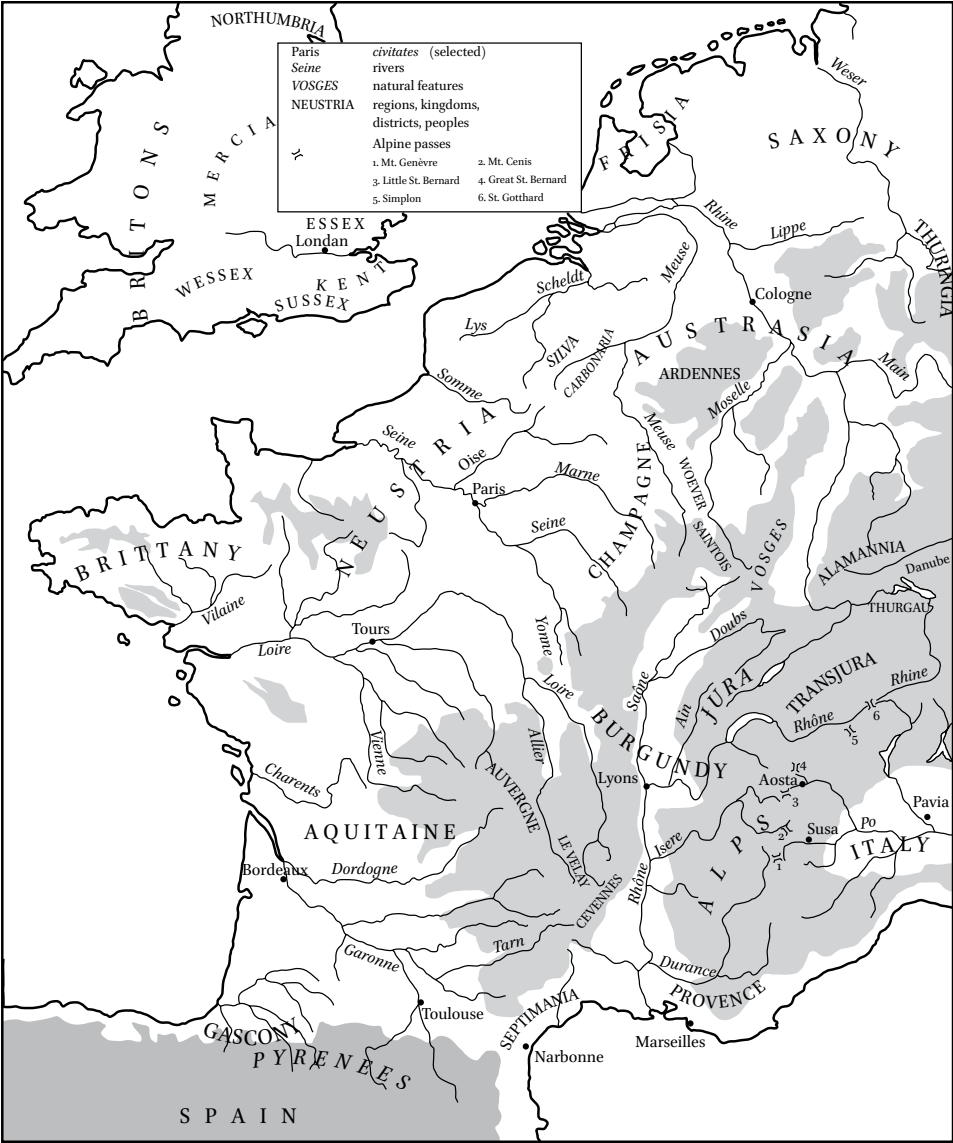
MAP 2   *The Regions of Gaul and its Environs in the Merovingian Period*

Rheims Capitals of Chlothar's sons in the division of 561 (Gregory, *Hist.* 4.22) in boldface

S A X O N Y

KENT

Rhine
Lippe

Cologne

Tongres

Coblenz

Tournai

Therouanne
Vitry
Cambrai

Mainz

Rouen

Berny
Aisne

Trier

Soissons
Rheims

Verdun

Metz

Bayeux

Paris

Châlons

Coutances

Strasbourg

Chartres
Melun

Andelot

Rennes

Le Mans

Châteaudum Sens
Troyes

Auxerre

Vannes

Vilaine

Angers

Tours

Blois

Orleans

Dijon

Doubs

Nantes

Bourges

Yonne

Autun

Chalon

Avenches

Vouillé

Saône

Ain

Geneva

Bex

Poitiers

Mâcon

Agaune

VALAIS

Limoges

Clermont
Auvergne

Lyons

Aosta

Milan

Saintes

Charente

Vienne

Susa

Pavia

Angoulême

Grenoble

Maurienne

Bordeaux

Périgueux

Valence
Die

Embrun

Eauze

Albi

Tarn

Avignon

Rièz

Nice

Dax

Nîmes

Beaucaire

Toulouse
Carcassone

Agde

Arles

Aix
Marseilles

Narbonne

Saint-Bertrand-
de-Comminges
(Convenae)

MAP 3 *Gaul in the 6th Century*

MAP 4   *The Division of 561*

MAP 5   *West and East around the Death of Theoderic the Great, a. 526*
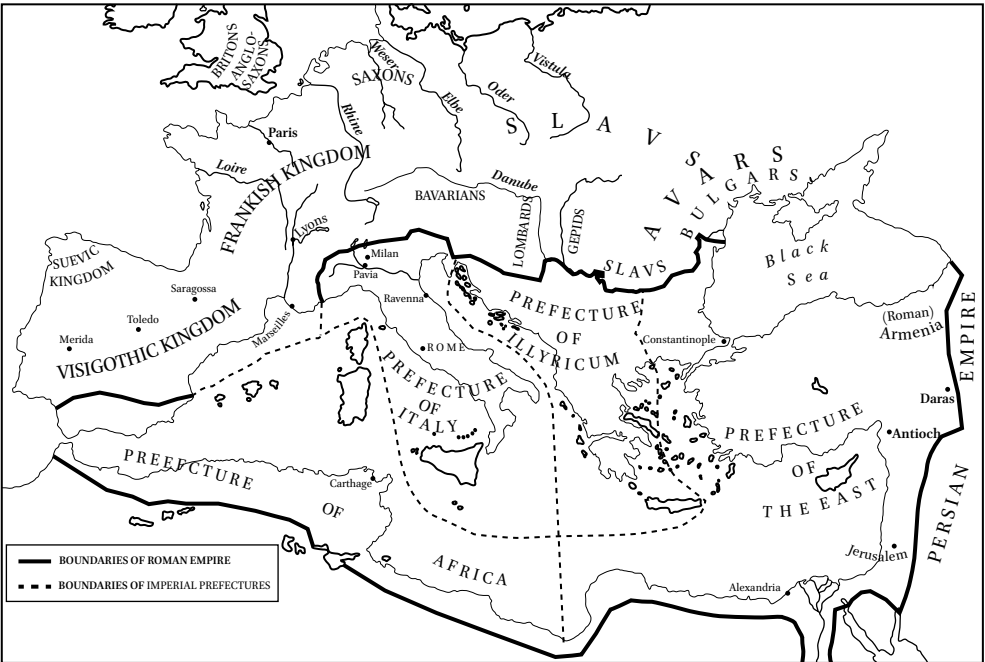
MAP 6   *West and East around the Deaths of Chlothar I (a. 561) and Justinian (a. 565)*
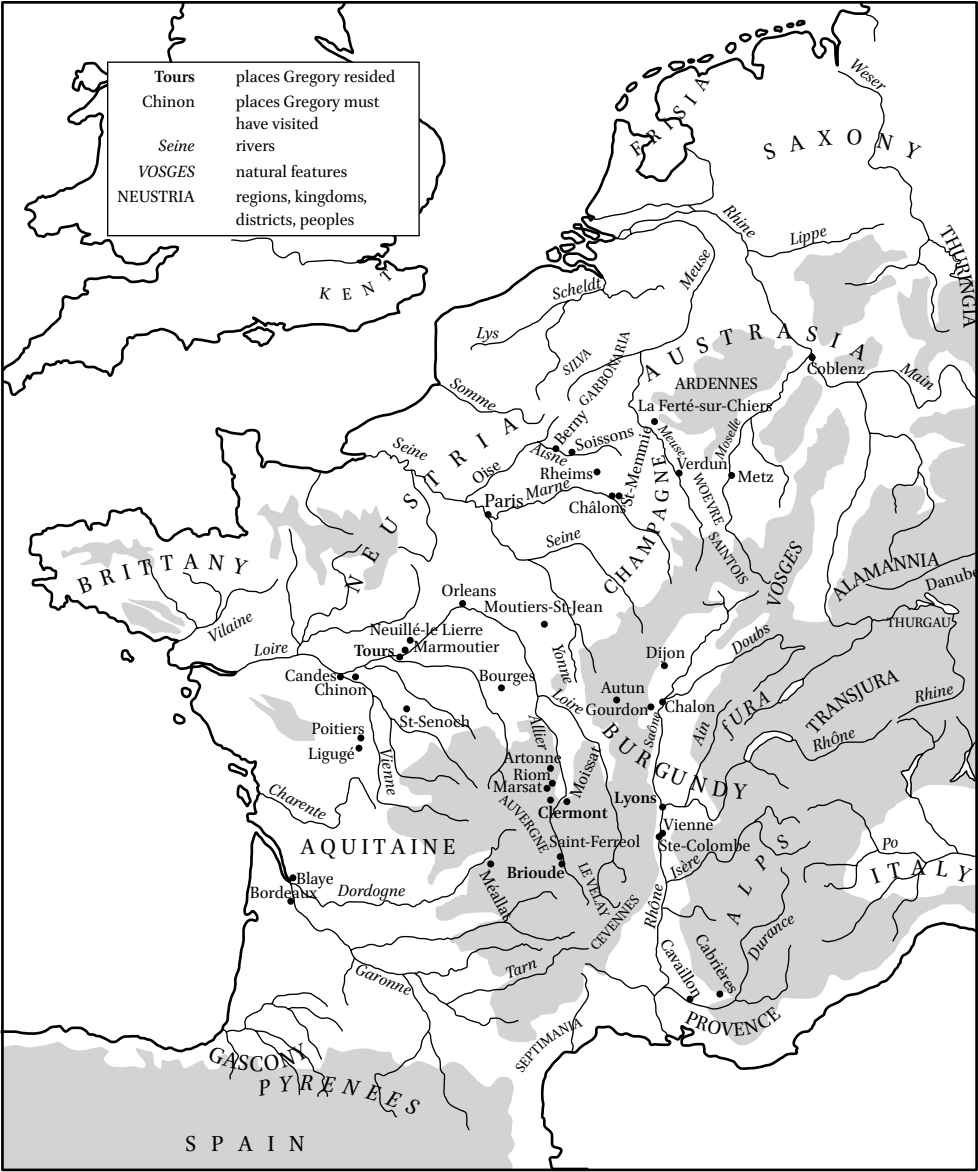
MAP 7 *Places where Gregory Lived and Visited* (*After Viellard-Troiekouroff,* Monuments, *p. 454, with list, p. 455*)

Merovingian Genealogies

CLOVIS I
481–511
m. ?
m. Chlothild

THEUDERIC I
511–33

Ingomer

CHLODOMER
511–24
m. Guntheuca

CHILDEBERT I
511–58
m. Ultrogotha

CHLOTHAR I
511–561

Chlothild
m. Amalaric

THEUDEBERT I
533–48
m. Deuteria
m. Wisigard

THEUDEBALD I
548–55

Theudoald Gunthar Chlodoald

two daughters

m. Guntheuca
m. Radegund
m. Ingund
m. Aregund
m. Chunsina
m. Wuldetrada
?

Gunthecar Childeric

CHARIBERT I
561–67
m. Ingoberga
m. Merofled
m. Theudogild
m. Marcovefa
m. ?

GUNTRAM
561–92
m. Veneranda
m. Marcatrude
m. Austrechild

SIGIBERT I
561–84

Chlodoswintha
m. Alboin

CHILPERIC I
561–84

Gundovald

Chramn

Bertha
m. Aethelberht

Chlothild
nun

sons and
daughters

see genealogy 2

see genealogy 3

GENEALOGY 1   *The Early Merovingians Clovis, his Sons, and Grandsons*

SIGIBERT I m. Brunhild
561–75

Ingund
m. Hermenegild

CHILDEBERT II
575–96
m. Faileuba

Chlodosind

Athanagild

THEUDEBERT II
596–612
m. ?
m. Bilichild
m. Theudechild

THEUDERIC II
596–613
m. ?
m. Ermenberga

Theudila

Merovech
† 612

Chlothar

SIGIBERT II
† 613

Childebert

Corbus
† 613

Merovech
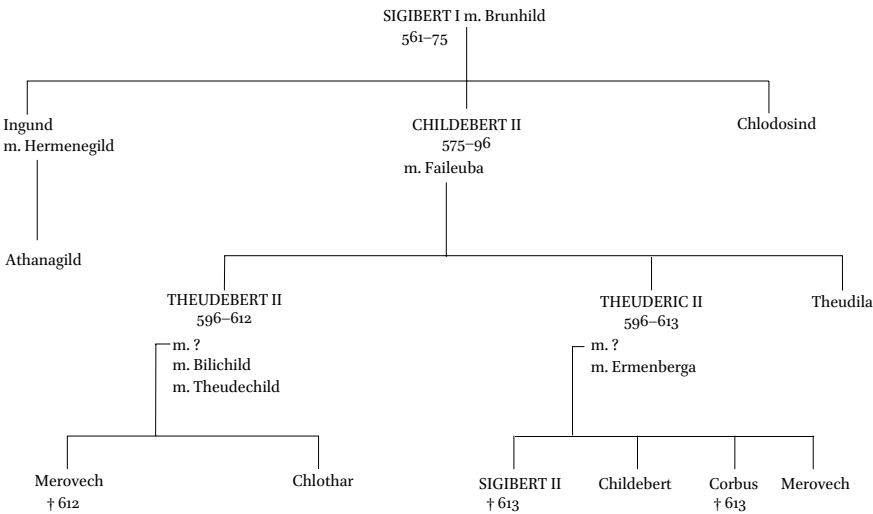
GENEALOGY 2   *The Early Merovingians: Sigibert I, Brunhild, and their Descendants*

CHILPERICI
561–84

m. Audovera
m. Fredegund
m. Galswinth

Theudebert Merovech Clovis Basina   Rigunth Samson Chlodobert Dagobert Theuderic   CHLOTHAR II
            m. Brunhild   584–629

m. ?
m. Berthetrude
m. Sichild   ?

Merovech   DAGOBERTI   CHARIBERT II
                623–39   629–32,
                                             Aquitaine

                Later Merovingians   Chilperic
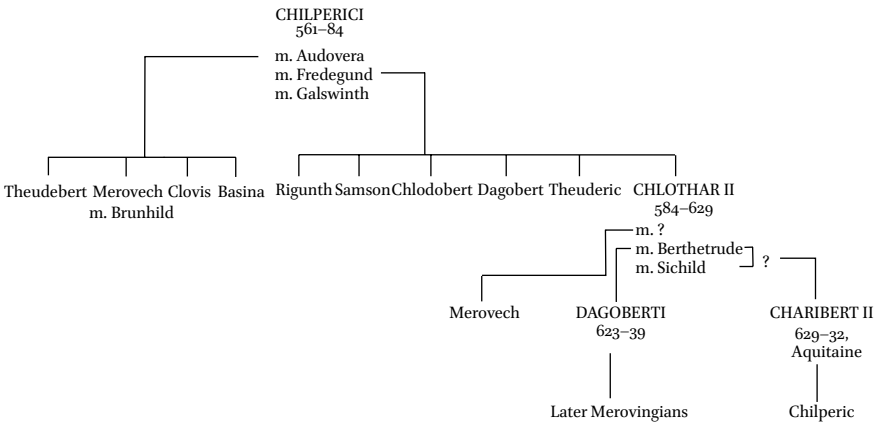
GENEALOGY 3   *The Early Merovingians: Chilperic 1, Fredegund, and their Descendants*

Athanagild = Goisuinth = Leovigild = unknown
551–68   569–86

Galswinth = CHILPERIC   Brunhild = SIGIBERT

                               Ingund = Hermenegild   Reccared ∞ Rigunth
                                                                          (see genealogy 3)
                                                                       = Chlodosind
                               Athanagild   (see genealogy 2)

                                                             | Key |
                                                             | ∞ = betrothal |
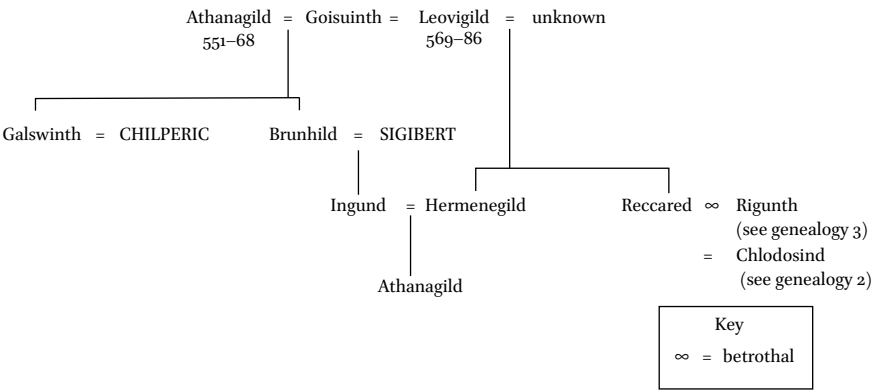
GENEALOGY 4   *The House of Chlothar 1 and the Visigothic Monarchy*

References

1a   Editions of Gregory's Works

Gregory of Tours. *B. Gregorii Turonensis episcopi Historiarum praecipue gallicarum libri X; In vitas patrum fere sui temporis lib. I; De gloria confessorum praecipue gallorum lib. I; Adonis Viennensis episcopi Sex aetatum mundi breves seu commentarii, usuqe ad Carolum Simplicem Francorum regem* (Paris, 1512).

Gregory of Tours. *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Historiarum libri X,* (eds.) B. Krusch and L. Levison, MGH SRM 1.1 (Hanover, 1951, rpt 1993).

Gregory of Tours. *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Miracula et opera minora, Liber in gloria martyrum, Liber de Virtutibus Sancti Iuliani, Libri I–IV de virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi, Liber vitae patrum, Liber in gloria confessorum, Liber de miraculis beati Andreae apostoli, Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium apud Ephysum,* (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 1.2 (Hanover, 1885; rev. rpt 1969).

Gregory of Tours. *Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium apud Ephysum translata in Latinum per Gregorium episcopum Turonicum,* (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 1.2 (Hanover, 1885; rev. rpt 1969); new edition, MGH SRM 7, (ed.) Bruno Krusch (Hanover, 1920), 757–769.

Gregory of Tours. *Sancti Georgii Florentii Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Opera omnia, necnon Fredegarii scholastici epitome et chronicum, cum suis continuatoribus et aliis antiquis monumentis. Ad codices manuscriptos & veteres editiones collata, emendata, & aucta, atque notis & observationibus illustrata,* (ed.) Thierry Ruinart (Paris, 1699) = PL 71.

Gregory of Tours. *Zehn Bücher Geschichten,* (ed.) and trans. Rudolf Buchner and Wilhelm Giesebrecht, 2 vols (Darmstadt, 1955).

Gregory of Tours. *Gregoire de Tours, Histoire des Francs, Livres I–VI: Text du Manuscrit de Corbie,* (ed.) Henri Omont (Paris, 1886).

1b   Abbreviations of Individual Works with Editions and Translations Used in This Book

CS = De cursu stellarum, (ed.) Bruno Krusch MGH SRM 1.2 (Hanover, 1885; rev. rpt 1969).

GC = *Liber in gloria confessorum*, (ed.) Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 1.2 (Hanover, 1885; rev. rpt 1969). Translation: Raymond Van Dam, *Glory of the Confessors* TTH (Liverpool, 1988).

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